

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, May 22, 2000
Volume 36—Number 20
Pages 1103–1163

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Editor's Note: The President was in Chicago, IL, on May 19, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under

regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for \$80.00 per year (\$137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for \$93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is \$3.00 (\$3.75 for foreign mailing).

There are no restrictions on the republication of material appearing in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*.

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Week Ending Friday, May 19, 2000

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting the Proposed
“Consumer Product Safety
Commission Enhanced Enforcement
Act of 2000”**

May 12, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit today for immediate consideration and prompt enactment the “Consumer Product Safety Commission Enhanced Enforcement Act of 2000.” This legislative proposal would increase the penalties that the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) could impose upon manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of consumer products who do not inform the CPSC when the company has reason to believe it has sold a product that does not meet Federal safety standards or could otherwise create a substantial product hazard. The proposal would also improve product recalls by enabling the CPSC to choose an alternative remedy in a recall if the CPSC finds that the remedy selected by the manufacturer is not in the public interest.

Under current consumer product safety laws, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of consumer products are required to inform the CPSC whenever they have information that one of their products: (1) fails to comply with a CPSC product safety standard; (2) contains a defect that could create a substantial product hazard; or (3) creates an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death. After a company reports this information to the CPSC, the CPSC staff initiates an investigation in cooperation with the company. If the CPSC concludes that the product presents a substantial product hazard and that a recall is in the public interest, the CPSC staff will work with the company to conduct a product safety recall. The sooner the CPSC hears about a dangerous product, the sooner the CPSC can act to remove the product from store shelves and inform consumers

about how to eliminate the hazard. That is why it is critical that companies inform the CPSC as soon as they are aware that one of their products may present a serious hazard to the public.

Unfortunately, in about half the cases involving the most significant hazards—where the product can cause death or serious injury—companies do not report to the CPSC. In those cases, the CPSC must get safety information from other sources, including its own investigators, consumers, or tragically, from hospital emergency room reports or death certificates. Sometimes years can pass before the CPSC learns of the product hazard, although the company may have been aware of it all along. During that time, deaths and injuries continue. Once the CPSC becomes aware of the hazard, many companies continue to be recalcitrant, and the CPSC staff must conduct its own independent investigation. This often includes finding and investigating product incidents and conducting extensive laboratory testing. This process can take a long time, which means that the most dangerous products remain on store shelves and in consumers’ homes longer, placing children and families at continuing risk.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission can currently assess civil penalties against companies who fail to report a dangerous product. Criminal penalties are also available in particularly serious cases. In fact, in 1999, the CPSC assessed 10 times the amount of civil penalties assessed 10 years ago. But, even with this more vigorous enforcement, too many companies still do not report, especially in cases involving serious harm.

This legislative proposal would enhance the CPSC’s civil and criminal enforcement authority. It would provide an added incentive for companies to comply with the law so that we can get dangerous products out

of stores and consumers' homes more quickly.

My legislative proposal would also help to make some product recalls more effective by allowing the CPSC to choose an alternative remedy if the CPSC finds that the manufacturer's chosen remedy is not in the public interest. Under current law, a company with a defective product that is being recalled has the right to select the remedy to be offered to the public. My proposal would continue to permit the company to select the remedy in a product recall. My proposal would also, however, allow the CPSC to determine—after an opportunity for a hearing—that the remedy selected by the company is not in the public interest. The CPSC may then order the company to carry out an alternative program that is in the public interest.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission helps to keep America's children and families safe. This legislative proposal would help the CPSC be even more effective in protecting the public from dangerous products. I urge the Congress to give this legislation prompt and favorable consideration.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 12, 2000.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

May 13, 2000

Good morning. This weekend Americans celebrate the first Mother's Day of the 21st century. For most of us, it's a happy occasion, a chance to thank the women who gave us life, cared for us as children, nurtured us into adulthood. But for thousands of mothers and fathers whose children have been killed by gun fire, tomorrow will be a day of sad memories.

Every day in America, nearly a dozen children are killed by guns, and 12 families receive a wound that never heals. And every day in America millions of moms and dads watch their children walk out the door in the morning and wonder if they'll come home safe that night.

That's why the First Lady and I are giving our strong support to tomorrow's Million Mom March. Tens of thousands of mothers and others are marching in Washington and more than 60 other cities across our Nation. They're saying, enough is enough. Congress must pass commonsense gun legislation to protect our children without constraining the rights of legitimate gun owners.

Many of the organizers have lost children of their own and other loved ones to gun fire. This past week I met with some of them at the White House and heard their stories: a son shot while playing with neighbors in his own backyard in New York; a teenager shot at his front door by party crashers in Virginia; a daughter shot with four others by classmates at her Arkansas middle school; a young man shot by Illinois gang members who expected, just like on television, that he would get up and walk away.

These moms are finding in their fear and loss the strength to send a wake-up call across America. As a father, I was heartbroken by their stories; as an American citizen, I was inspired. They're saying gun violence touches us all, wherever we live, whatever the color of our skin, whether or not we have children. They remind us that the loss of a child is a loss for us all. And they know we have the power to do something about it.

We do have the power to teach our children the right values, to build strong communities, to crack down on those who use guns to commit crimes. But the key to our success in this, as in so many areas, has got to be more prevention, doing more to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals in the first place. There's no reason why we can't do that.

The Million Mom March is calling on Congress to act on the commonsense gun legislation that has been before it for 10 months now. The bill wouldn't take away anybody's gun or make anyone miss a day during the hunting season. What it would do is to close the loophole that lets anyone buy a gun at a gun show without a background check. It would require child safety locks with all new handguns. And it would ban the import of large capacity ammunition clips, which nobody is using for sport or self-defense, and

which makes a mockery of our assault weapons ban.

I think the Million Mom March is already a success, before anyone takes the first step. These people are helping to lead a grassroots effort that has already put stronger laws in place in States like California, Massachusetts, and Maryland. They're letting the gun lobby know it is no match for America's moms. But our nationwide fight won't be over tomorrow, no matter how many march. We have so much work still to do.

Throughout our entire history as a nation every movement for social progress, every step toward safety and justice for all has been fueled by the energy and effort of ordinary citizens. The Million Mom March is the latest successor to that great American tradition. If the moms stick with it, they will succeed. They will make America a safer, more humane nation. Helping to keep guns out of the wrong hands is a Mother's Day gift we can all be proud of.

Happy Mother's Day, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:25 a.m. on May 12 in the Ohio Army/National Guard Facility in Akron, Ohio, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Rally for the Million Mom March

May 14, 2000

Well, thank you very much, and good morning. First of all, I think we ought to give Christine O'Brien another hand. *[Applause]* She gave such a good speech, I was wishing she were running for Congress against some of those anti-gun registration—*[laughter]*.

I want to thank Donna Dees-Thomases and all the organizers and all the regions and all the States and all the communities, now over 60 of them—I think about 70 now in the country where there will be marches today.

I want to thank my long-time friend Mike Barnes of Handgun Control. And I want to thank the many, many Members of Congress

who are here to march with you today, many of them over here.

I would also like to welcome you on behalf of not only Hillary and me but also Al and Tipper Gore, who have embraced this challenge with us and believe so strongly in what you are trying to do. Our families care about it.

I want to say that—I've put my notes away here—I've just one or two things I want to say. First of all, you may have noticed that when I was walking up here, this lovely Native American woman behind me started crying. That's because her child was killed on Mother's Day. She is the second mother I have met in the last 72 hours who lost a child on Mother's Day. There are so many—there's another one.

One of the things your mothers teach you—I want to cut to the chase here; let's get down to what this is all about. One of the things your mothers teach you when you're growing up is that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Right? How many of us had our mothers tell us, "Look both ways before you cross the street. Tie your shoes before you start running. I don't want to get my shots, but an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"—in every single way.

Now, what the argument in Washington, DC, has been, the dominant argument for the last 30 years, since we first began to discuss this, is that an ounce of prevention is totally unacceptable, and we'll try to throw 100 pounds of cure at it and hope it works out. That's the first thing I want to say. This is about prevention.

The second thing I want to say is, when I became President there were a lot of people, I think, who wondered whether the crime rate would ever go down. But for a combination of factors and a lot of people's efforts around the country but certainly because of the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, and other related efforts, we now have the lowest crime rate in a quarter century, and gun violence is down 35 percent. Now, that's the good news.

It's still the most violent civilized country in the world, with the highest murder rate. But at least we know we can make a difference now, and we know what works. So

nobody has an excuse anymore. It's not like we don't know that prevention works. We know it does work. One of the things mothers learn to do real early is not let their kids make excuses when they shouldn't. We don't have an excuse anymore.

Now, the third thing I want to—the point I want to make is, the other side wins this argument on, basically, power, money, and fear, and using labels. You know, there was a story this week saying, well, they have reduced support for these measures because white males—not mothers, I might add—are shying away from gun control. I want to tell you something, folks, this is their labels against our facts.

Now, they talk about the second amendment. Well, the Supreme Court says there is a constitutional right to travel. But we license car owners, and we register cars, and we have speed limits, and we have child safety restraint laws, and we have seat belt laws, and you don't hear people talk about car control. When is the last time you heard somebody stand up and give a speech about the imminent evils of car control threatening our constitutional right to travel—car control?

Now, if somebody came to take all our cars and put them in somebody else's garage and we couldn't get around, we could talk about car control. Meanwhile, we are thankful for highway safety measures that keep our children alive. We believe an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure when it comes to exercising the constitutional right to travel.

And when people talk about—as Christine said, and Hillary mentioned this—they say guns don't kill people; people do. Well, even our adversaries fly around on airplanes a lot. Suppose I gave you the following speech tomorrow. Suppose I said, "I'm really worried about how crowded airports are, and almost everybody who goes into an airport is honest, and after all, bombs don't kill people; people do. I'm going to take the metal detectors out of the airport, and the next time a plane blows up, we'll throw the book at them." [Laughter]

Folks, remember this. The facts are your friends. Don't let people get everybody all upset and thrown into a turmoil here and start screaming and yelling names and labels. We have not been responsible parents for

our children because we have, in this one area of our national life, said we're not going to live on prevention; we're going to live on punishment alone.

And when we did finally take some preventive action with the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, the cop-killer bullet bans—all of which were opposed, I might add, by the same people who say these measures are wrong—they made a difference to the lives of Americans. They helped to make us safer.

Let me just say this. I respect so much those of you who are here today who lost loved ones, who are here to redeem the lives of the loved ones you lost by saving the lives of other people's children. I am grateful to you. America is grateful to you. You could be sitting home today burying your heart-break and anger, and you undertook this journey. I know how painful it must be for you.

But just remember, you're being good mothers today. You're reminding all those people out there who have listened to these crazy excuses that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, that your little babies didn't have advantage of it, and you're just trying to give it to the other children in this country. This day is especially for you. Don't be deterred by the intimidation. Don't be deterred by the screaming. Don't be deterred by the political mountain you have to climb.

You just remember this: There are more people who think like you in America. What we have to do is to get them to think. The facts are your friends. You have to get them to think. And then you have to get them to make it clear that as they think, they will vote. When that happens, when everybody thinks about this and once they think about it they decide to vote on what they think, you will have changed America. In the great tradition that runs from Seneca Falls to Selma, you will have redeemed the promise of freedom. You will have strengthened the bonds of community. You will have proved that the American Constitution works because decent people can stand against mountains of power and move those mountains for the betterment of their children. That's what you're doing.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Christine O'Brien, New Jersey organizer, who introduced the President, and Donna Dees-Thomases, founder, Million Mom March; and Michael D. Barnes, president, Handgun Control, Inc. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Death of Former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan

May 14, 2000

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the death of former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi. I want to extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Chizuko, his family, and his nation.

Japan has lost a strong and vibrant leader. The United States has lost one of our closest friends.

I had the honor of meeting with Prime Minister Obuchi several times after he became Prime Minister in 1998. I visited him in Tokyo that fall, and he came to Washington for a memorable visit in May 1999. In all our meetings, I was impressed by his effective statesmanship and his personal warmth. He believed ardently, as I do, in a U.S.-Japanese partnership built upon shared values and mutual respect. The personal friendship he and I forged helped us act on that belief and strengthened our desire to address all the issues affecting our two countries in a spirit of true friendship. The bonsai tree he gave me, and which he tended himself, is a living symbol of our alliance.

The job of Prime Minister is never easy, but Keizo Obuchi met every challenge with courage and confidence. He embodied before the world the famous Japanese virtues of honor, loyalty, and determination. He became known for imitating the art and skill of an orchestra conductor in finding harmony among people of different views. From his first days in office, he took swift steps to meet the economic challenges facing Japan, and he also gave strong support to the cause of peace—from Kosovo to East Timor. Prime Minister Obuchi worked hard in countless ways to strengthen our alliance and to place

it on a new foundation for the 21st century. The friendship between our peoples remains the cornerstone of stability in east Asia and was greatly strengthened by his lifetime of building bridges between us.

Prime Minister Obuchi touched the hearts of Americans in simple, human ways: when he threw out what he called an unhittable pitch to Sammy Sosa; when he reminded us of the honor he felt meeting Robert Kennedy as young man; when he told us how he drew from that meeting new inspiration for the noble privilege of serving a great people.

On behalf of all Americans, I am grateful for Prime Minister Obuchi's dedicated, principled public service and for all he did to build for us a brighter future. I will work closely with Prime Minister Mori to continue our close cooperation with Japan.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Situation in Sierra Leone

May 12, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Military forces of the Government of Sierra Leone and Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) forces provided by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were engaged in military operations in Sierra Leone against the insurgent Revolutionary United Front (RUF) until mid-1999. At that time, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF signed the Lome Peace Agreement, which provides for an end to hostilities and the disarmament, demobilization, and resettlement of the insurgent RUF forces. The United Nations Security Council in U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1270 and 1289 established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to facilitate implementation of the Lome Agreement and provide security at key locations and government buildings and at all sites of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program, among other tasks.

Recently, as UNAMSIL expanded its efforts to establish monitoring and disarmament sites in or near RUF-controlled territory, RUF forces initiated military activity

in those areas, killing at least four peacekeepers, and capturing or isolating hundreds of UNAMSIL personnel. The situation is critical. The United States is consulting with the United Nations, members of the U.N. Security Council, troop-contributing countries and West African States on ways to resolve the crisis.

The U.S. Embassy in Sierra Leone has drawn down its Embassy personnel and evacuated U.S. citizens to minimize the number of U.S. citizens exposed to risk. The Ambassador and a small support staff will remain in Freetown for the time being to monitor the situation. As a prudent planning measure, a U.S. coastal patrol vessel, USS THUNDERBOLT (PC 12), has deployed to the region to participate in an evacuation operation of U.S. personnel should such action become warranted. This vessel and her crew are equipped with the normal complement of weapons.

The United Kingdom informed us that it was deploying an aircraft carrier and an amphibious readiness group to Sierra Leone to prepare to participate in evacuation operations if necessary. Some of the units identified to participate in such an operation include U.S. military personnel on exchange programs with the British military. The British government requested permission for a small number of U.S. military exchange personnel to deploy with their units if they were directed to participate in evacuation operations in Sierra Leone. Secretary of Defense Cohen has authorized these U.S. exchange personnel to deploy to Sierra Leone with their host units in support of these activities.

On May 12, a U.S. C-17 aircraft is scheduled to deliver urgently required ammunition and other supplies and equipment to Sierra Leone for the Jordanian contingent in UNAMSIL. The United States will provide further transportation support for the U.N. mission and its contingents. Such transportation support may result in the temporary presence of logistics aircraft and associated support personnel, including, as appropriate, force protection elements at the international airport near Freetown. In addition, the United States has sent an advance party of military logistics planners of the U.S. European Command to Nigeria to discuss with

Nigerian officials their specific airlift requirements should it become necessary to move military forces from Nigeria into Sierra Leone.

These actions have been taken pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in these matters.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 15.

Remarks at a Peace Officers Memorial Ceremony

May 15, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, Gil Gallegos, for your kind remarks and your leadership and all these years we have spent working together. I want to say to you and all the other leaders of this organization and the auxiliary—Lmae Tull, Steve Young, Jim Pasco, and others—how much I appreciate what you have done in working with me and Attorney General Reno, Secretary Summers, and the other members of our administration.

I also want to thank the Members of Congress who support us every year. I see Congressman Gilman and Senator Kennedy over there. There may be others from Congress here, but I thank them for coming.

I thank the law enforcement executives, chiefs, and the rank and file members across America who are here today. And most of all, I thank the many family members of our fallen officers who have come here to observe this event in the midst of all their pain and loss. I appreciate the support of our fellow Americans for your endeavors.

Today they were embodied by the wonderful song my long-time friend Tony Bennett sang—I thought he was terrific. And they are embodied by the prayers and actions of so

many of your fellow citizens. I would like to mention just one today, on a personal note.

Law enforcement doesn't have a better friend in the Congress than the former State policeman from Michigan named Bart Stupak. Bart and his wife, Laurie, lost their son over the weekend, and I hope you will remember them in your prayers, because he has been as good a friend as the people in blue have ever had in the United States Congress.

The event we commemorate today has a long history, not just 19 years. In 1789, 211 years ago, just a year after our Constitution was ratified, a United States marshal named Robert Forsyth was shot and killed in the line of duty. Since then, over 14,000 law enforcement officers have given their lives to protect the liberties upon which America was founded.

We owe these brave men and women a debt of gratitude that is immeasurable and unending. Every year we come here to honor them, carve their names in stone so that future generations will know who they are and know that they died as they lived, as heroes.

I could talk about all of them represented here today and their families—time doesn't permit. So let me just tell you two stories that I found to be representative.

Corporal Steven Levy of the Washington Township, New Jersey Police Department, always believed in being out front on public safety, whether saving a drowning man from icy waters or teaching self-defense classes to women and children during off-duty hours. Last October he was out front again when he led his SWAT team into a house where a domestic dispute had escalated into gunfire. When there, he was shot through a closed bedroom door, leaving behind a wife and two young children and a legacy of service never to be forgotten.

Officer James Henry Camp was a community police officer walking the beat in some of Chicago's toughest public housing developments—a big ex-marine. He won the respect of young men whom he counseled away from gangs and drugs and the love of little children for whom he always had a piece of candy. One day last March he and his partner stopped two men driving a stolen car. While

making the arrest, Officer Camp was shot and killed. He was a newlywed.

Today we recall the service and all the stories of the courageous law enforcement officers, 139 of them, whose names will be added to the Roll of Honor this year. Their purpose and passion was the safety of the people. We can never repay them or their families, but we can honor them, and not just with words but with action.

You heard Gil Gallegos talk about the role of law enforcement in the declining crime rate. I always try to make sure the American people know how it happened. Men and women in uniform did not give up when, year-in and year-out, the crime rate went up. We decided 7 years ago to try to give you some support, because it was obvious already that there were strategies in many of our communities that would work to bring down the crime rate: more police, more prevention, tougher penalties.

You told us that assault weapons and illegal guns were undermining your ability to fight crime and drugs. So we passed the assault weapons ban, the Brady law, which has stopped over a half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying handguns, banned the cop-killer bullet, provided 100,000 more police for our neighborhoods—ahead of schedule and under budget.

Last week we learned that, thanks to you, crime is now down for 8 years in a row. Every officer here and every family here who has lost a loved one should be very proud of the lives you have saved in the United States of America in bringing that crime rate down.

Yet no one here believes we are safe enough, and the very fact that we now know what works imposes on all of us an even higher responsibility to do more of what works: to put more police on the street in the toughest neighborhoods; to hire more prosecutors and ATF agents and inspectors; to go after gun crimes; to invest in gun-tracing systems until we can trace every bullet in every gun used in a crime anywhere in America.

I also believe we must pass more common-sense gun safety legislation: the child trigger locks, banning the importation of large ammunition clips, closing the gun show loophole. We passed it last year in the Senate, when the Vice President cast the tie-breaking

vote, but it's been stalled here for 10 months. And yesterday on this Mall, there were somewhere between a half a million and 750,000 mothers gathered, and over a million in 70 sites across America, to say that we shouldn't wait any longer for this kind of legislation. I hope we will listen to what they had to say. It will also save a lot of police officers' lives.

Last Friday the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Henry Hyde, and his Democratic counterpart, John Conyers, made some real progress to resolve the impasse we're having over this legislation and the gun show loophole. I thank them for their efforts. This should not be a political issue. It should not be, and it is not, about taking guns away from law-abiding citizens. It's about keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and keeping more of our citizens, especially our children and our police officers, alive. I hope the conferees will meet and pass legislation so that I can sign it.

I also think we have to do more to protect law enforcement officers, men and women who risk their lives every day. Sixteen years ago now, when I was Governor of my home State of Arkansas, a friend of mine, a State trooper by the name of Louis Bryant, made what he thought was a routine traffic stop. He stopped a man in an RV, who was a political radical with an arsenal in the vehicle, and he was shot to death. Then I was told that if only he had a bulletproof vest on, he probably would have survived.

I remember that day as if it were yesterday. I knew his wife; his brother-in-law was one of my State troopers on my security detail. I lived through their agony. And so I began to try to make sure every police officer in our State could have a vest. Every police officer in America should have one.

Two years ago I was proud to sign the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act. Now, the Federal Government pays up to 50 percent of the cost of vests that State and local officers buy—or agencies buy for their officers. To date, we've purchased over 92,000 of these vests. There's enough money in this year's budget to increase that number to 180,000. But I asked Gil today and the Attorney General how many law enforcement officers needed them, how many are in the line

of fire. We figure there are at least twice that many, twice that 180,000. But the program is set to expire next year.

So today I intend to ask Congress to support new legislation offered by the original sponsors of the bill—Senator Leahy, Senator Campbell, Congressman Visclosky—to extend the program for 3 more years and double the funding. If we do it, we'll be able to protect every single police officer in the United States with a bulletproof vest.

I also want to thank Gil Gallegos and your organization for the work you are doing to see that a medal of valor is awarded to honor the courage of officers who move above and beyond the call of duty. There is legislation to do this in Congress, but it is now stalled. Today I have directed the Attorney General to develop a plan to create an award through executive action of the President to recognize public safety officers who have exhibited extraordinary valor.

You should not have to wait any longer, and there are many reasons bills get caught up in Congress, not all of them the fault of the Members who are supporting them or those who have the committee. But we should not wait. This country, every year, should issue a medal to honor extraordinary acts of valor by police officers.

Shortly before he, himself, was killed in 1968, Robert Kennedy said that the fight against crime is a fight to preserve that quality of community which is at the root of our greatness.

The fallen officers we honor today put themselves at the forefront of that fight. And they do exemplify America's greatness. Nothing we say or do will bring them back. Perhaps nothing we can say or do can ease the pain of their families or the sorrow in your hearts. Only God and time and family and friends can do that.

But we do want you to know, every one of you, we honor them, and we honor you. The best way for us to continue to do that is to press on with the struggle for a safer America, a struggle they thought was worth their lives. And it's certainly worth everything we can possibly do.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. on the West Grounds at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Gilbert G. Gallegos, president, Steve Young, vice president, and James O. Pasco, Jr., executive director, Fraternal Order of Police; Lmae Tull, president, Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary; and singer Tony Bennett.

**Memorandum on Honoring
Extraordinary Valor of Our
Public Safety Officers**

May 15, 2000

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Honoring Extraordinary Valor of our Public Safety Officers

Over the past 7 years, the cooperative efforts of law enforcement officers on the Federal, State, and local level have resulted in dramatic declines in our crime rate. I am proud of the key initiatives my Administration has proposed and supported that have given law enforcement officers the resources they need to fight crime. Through our Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, we have funded the hiring of over 100,000 more police officers to work at the local level to build partnerships and combat crime. We have fought for tools to keep guns out of the wrong hands, and passed the Brady Law that has stopped over half a million felons, fugitives, and domestic abusers from buying guns. We have taken more criminals off the street with tougher penalties and we have helped States build more prisons to keep dangerous criminals behind bars. And we have given our young people positive alternatives to prevent crime in the first place.

As a result of our crime-fighting strategy and the cooperative efforts of law enforcement at the Federal, State, and local level, America has experienced dramatic declines in our crime rate. The overall crime rate has dropped for the eighth year in a row, the longest continuous decline on record. The national homicide rate is at its lowest level in over 30 years. By making crime prevention, reduction, and prosecution a top priority, we have created a renewed sense of security in our Nation's cities, towns, and neighborhoods.

This extraordinary record of success has not come without a heavy cost. Every day, the brave men and women of law enforcement put themselves on the front line of our battle to reduce crime. Each year, there are countless acts of individual courage and heroism by officers in the field. Although the majority of these acts do not result in any permanent disability or death, sadly, each year we mourn the loss of those who sacrificed their lives for this cause. The annual Police Week and National Peace Officers Memorial Day commemorations allow all Americans to pay tribute to the brave men and women of law enforcement. Few among us are put in the daily jeopardy that peace officers can find themselves in during even seemingly routine policing activity. To find examples of this courage, we need to look no further than the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial where the names of more than 14,000 officers who gave their lives to protect ours are carved in stone and memorialized for the ages.

In order to recognize the exemplary work carried out by public safety officers at all levels of government, the Congress should immediately pass legislation to create a Medal of Valor for exceptional valor and courage demonstrated by our public safety officers. Unfortunately, such legislation has remained stalled for months.

These heroes should not have to wait any longer for the recognition they deserve. So as we await the passage of legislation, I hereby direct you to develop a plan to create a Presidential award through Executive action to recognize public safety officers who have exhibited extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty. The award shall be awarded annually by the President. In developing this plan, where appropriate, you should consult with other relevant Government departments and agencies. The plan should designate a group of experts representing all aspects of the public safety sector, management, and labor, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency services officers who will submit written recommendations to you of candidates who exemplify the valor this award recognizes. Further, the plan should establish criteria for recommending nominees for the

award of valor, as well as the design of the award itself. I direct you to report back to me with this plan within 30 days.

All Americans can feel pride in the work done each and every day by those who promise to protect and serve. It is my hope that with the creation of this award of valor the efforts of public safety officers are more publicly recognized and appreciated by our Nation.

William J. Clinton

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision Striking Down a Provision of the Violence Against Women Act

May 15, 2000

I am deeply disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision today in *United States v. Morrison*. In this case, the Court struck down the civil remedy provision contained in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). In 1994, as part of comprehensive crime control legislation, I signed into law the Violence Against Women Act. This historic, important piece of Federal legislation contains a broad array of groundbreaking laws to combat violence against women. VAWA passed Congress with bipartisan support.

The Supreme Court's decision today does not affect the viability of VAWA as a whole. It does not affect any of the VAWA grant programs nor does it affect Federal criminal provisions that punish interstate domestic violence and stalking crimes. The Supreme Court did, however, invalidate one important provision of the Violence Against Women Act that gave victims of gender-motivated violence the ability to sue their attackers for lost earnings, medical expenses, and other damages. Because I continue to believe that there should be remedies for victims of gender-motivated violence, we plan to study the Supreme Court's decision in *Morrison* to determine the best means to help these victims.

VAWA has provided funds to communities across the Nation to address the tragedy of violence against women. These funds have made a crucial difference in women's lives. Unfortunately, VAWA funding is only authorized until the end of fiscal year 2000. I have made the reauthorization and strengthening

of VAWA a top legislative goal for this year. If we work together, we can enact a bill that will keep women in this country safe from violence.

Proclamation 7308—National Defense Transportation Day and National Transportation Week, 2000

May 15, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Throughout the past century, America's national transportation system has played a crucial role in strengthening our economy, protecting our safety, and improving the quality of life for all Americans. Interconnecting networks of railroads, ports, and waterways have transported millions of passengers and billions of dollars' worth of freight. Our national highway system connected cities to rural communities and people to jobs. The Wright Brothers' invention of the airplane gave birth to a world-class aviation system that revolutionized travel, created new industries, and brought the nations of the world closer. The quality and versatility of all these modes of transportation gave our Nation a powerful defense tool as well, enabling us to move troops and materiel swiftly and efficiently in times of conflict and crisis. Now, as we begin a new century, our national transportation system must embrace exciting new possibilities and new challenges.

One of the most important of those challenges is safety. Advances in technology offer us great hope for progress in reducing accidents and fatalities. For example, the Federal Aviation Administration is working in partnership with the airline industry, pilots, technicians, and air traffic controllers to use improved forecasting and new communications technology to detect severe weather sooner, to let pilots and passengers know promptly about anticipated delays, and to centralize air traffic decisionmaking during severe storms in order to reduce delays. Automobile manufacturers are also using new technologies and design innovations—from stronger metals to new safety lights to advanced brake technology—to prevent accidents and save lives.

Another of our great transportation challenges is to develop alternative fuels and clean energy sources that will not harm our environment. Earlier this year, I signed an Executive Order to ensure the Federal Government's leadership in reducing petroleum consumption and promoting the use of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs). By developing and using AFVs, we can reduce greenhouse gases and other pollutants, enhance our Nation's energy self-sufficiency by reducing the demand for imported oil, and create new products and jobs.

If we make wise and informed choices today and in the years to come, we can make our communities more livable, give our citizens greater choice and mobility, protect our environment, and help create a truly global community. The 20th century was indeed a golden age for transportation; the 21st century can be an even brighter one.

In recognition of the importance of our Nation's transportation system to our national security and economic health, and in honor of the many dedicated men and women who have ensured its continued excellence through the years, the United States Congress, by joint resolution approved May 16, 1957 (36 U.S.C. 120), has designated the third Friday in May of each year as "National Defense Transportation Day" and, by joint resolution approved May 14, 1962 (36 U.S.C. 133), declared that the week during which that Friday falls be designated "National Transportation Week."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Friday, May 19, 2000, as National Defense Transportation Day and May 14 through May 20, 2000, as National Transportation Week. I urge all Americans to observe these occasions with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 18, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 19.

Remarks Honoring the 1999 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Houston Comets

May 15, 2000

The President. Please be seated. Good afternoon, and welcome to the Rose Garden. I want to thank the Marine Brass for playing for us and bringing us in, and also thank three Members from the Texas delegation for being here: Representative Ken Bentsen, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, and Representative Gene Green, thank you for coming.

I want to welcome the president of the WNBA, Val Ackerman; Coach Chancellor; and Leslie and Nanci Alexander. And I know we have all the team here. Sheryl Swoopes was here in April of 1993 with the Lady Raiders of Texas Tech. How about that? I remember that.

And I want to say a special word of welcome to Loretta Perrot, sister of Kim Perrot. I know we're all glad that she's here with the team today, and I welcome her.

We have a lot of other distinguished athletes and sports figures in the crowd today, as well as some students from Ben Murch Elementary School, the DC city public school champions. Welcome.

Today we're here to celebrate the team that refuses to lose, the Houston Comets. Three years ago I had the privilege of speaking with your team after you had won the first championship, the first in WNBA history. In 1998 you took the crown again. And this season, with your victory over the Liberty, you're at the top again, joining the ranks of Bill Russell's Celtics and Michael Jordan's Bulls, becoming only the fourth franchise in the history of basketball to win three titles in a row. I have—yes, give them another hand. *[Applause]* That's good.

Some of you may know, I'm a modestly fanatic basketball fan, and I follow the WNBA every season. And I am delighted by the continuing progress in both the great quality of play and the enthusiasm of the

fans, and I think it's only going to get better and better and better.

I want to say, too, I watched the final series. I saw some or all of every one of those games. And I was impressed by the teamwork, as well as the star work. I was pretty impressed that in the last game, Cynthia and Sheryl scored 20 of the first 22 points. I need some people like that on my team from time to time around here. *[Laughter]*

And I want to say also, though, you don't win three times in a row unless you have a team, unless everybody has a role to play and everybody plays it, and unless people understand that they all do better when they help each other. And that's the sort of spirit that we need more of, indeed, in more other teams in our country and in running our communities and our Nation.

Great basketball teams are also led by great coaches. Coach Van Chancellor has raised the standard of excellence in women's basketball. And in return, he's been named Coach of the Year three times in a row. I know because of the loss of Kim this has not been an easy year for this team. Adversity breaks some people. It caused you to break records. You should all be proud of that as well.

Your team has taught America a lot, not just about the game at which you excel but about courage and perseverance, self-confidence and teamwork. It's no wonder so many young girls are now following your lead in taking up basketball. A new generation of women are watching, learning, developing better skills, and dreaming loftier dreams.

Congratulations on a well-deserved victory, and thank you for setting an example for all of us to follow.

And now, I'd like to introduce the president of the WNBA, Val Ackerman. Val.

[At this point, Ms. Ackerman and Coach Van Chancellor made brief remarks. Players Cynthia Cooper, Sheryl Swoopes, and Tina Thompson presented a jersey to the President.]

The President. Well, thank you very much for the unisex jersey here. *[Laughter]* I'll fight with Hillary over the right to wear it.

Thank you again for your example. I did want to say this about your coach: When I first started watching him on television, you know, when I saw him working with them and I thought about his roots, I thought, it's kind of nice to have a guy winning in the WNBA who speaks without an accent. *[Laughter]* Maybe it's just my ear, but it sounds good to me.

Coach Chancellor. We're from the same area.

The President. I know. That's what I was meaning, you know. You may get mine back, before I know it. *[Laughter]*

And thank you, Cynthia, for your remarks. And I thank all of you. And I will wear this when I work out, and I'll always remember this day. I wish you many more championships. We have a lot of happy moments here in the Rose Garden, but I have a feeling that this is one I'll remember for a good long while.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:06 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Houston Comets President Leslie L. Alexander and his wife, Nanci; and Loretta Perrot, sister of team member Kim Perrot, who died of cancer.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Robert Wexler

May 15, 2000

Thank you very much. When Rob started saying all that, I had to pinch myself and make sure I was still alive. *[Laughter]* I want to, first of all, thank all of you for being here for Rob and for Laurie. And I want to thank you for your support for what his career has embodied.

I feel just as strongly about him, if not more strongly, as he apparently does about me. I was very pleased. I admire him because he stands up and fights for what he believes in. He'll take a tough vote when it has to be taken, and he tries to think things through in ways that always have an eye on the future.

You know, the great problem that any advanced society has is that it's always well organized, and that's good. But the bad news is, too often there are too few people who

will be willing to change and move us toward the future.

And he was a part of this, what we called the New Democratic movement, when I started back in '93. We believed we could be pro-business and pro-labor. We thought we could balance the budget and still invest in education more. We thought we could be pro-economic growth and pro-environmental preservation. And I think part of it was his experience with State Government before coming here, because a lot of us who had lived in the real world before we moved to Washington—[laughter]—thought that it was sort of strange here. Everybody expected you to get on one side of an issue or another, and then just scream as loud as you could and hope every third or fourth day you'd get your 15 seconds on the news. It wasn't a very efficient way to govern or run a country, and we were paying for it.

And so we've had a pretty good run here. But you must understand that very little I've achieved would have been possible if I hadn't had the support of Members of my own party in Congress at critical times. And nobody embodies, in my view, the approach we ought to be taking toward the future any better than he does. I'm really proud of him.

And we have a lot of big decisions to face this year and next year. But when you encapsulate them all, I would say, here's the story line: When I took office in 1993, a lot of people didn't know whether America would work or not. If I said to you in '92, in the election, "Vote for me, folks, and when I get done here, we will have turned deficits into surpluses, and we'll pay off \$300 or \$400 billion on the national debt," you'd say, "You know, he seems like a pleasant young man, but he's slightly deranged. We'd better send him home." [Laughter]

So what did we do? We had to worry about, first of all, getting our priorities in order, putting people first, as I called it in '92, getting the right kind of ideas, and then, basically, pointing the country in the right direction. That was the metaphor I used in our '96 campaign, building a bridge to the 21st century. And a lot of it was really tough.

We passed our economic plan by one vote in the House and the Senate in '93. And there were several other times during the last

7 years when we won by one vote, especially in the Senate. As Al Gore always says, "Whenever I vote, we win." [Laughter] And lamentably, he had to vote a lot. So it wasn't easy.

Now the country plainly is going in the right direction. Just last week we announced that for the eighth year in a row, crime is down, gun crime down 35 percent since '93, the lowest overall crime rate in over 25 years. So it's not just the economy—welfare rolls cut in half, 90 percent of our kids immunized for the first time in history. And I could go on and on.

So what's the question this time? The question this time is, what do we as a people propose to do with this prosperity? When you go home tonight you ought to think about it. Those of you that brought your children, you ought to look at them before you answer.

You know, as I get older—and unfortunately, it seems to be an irrevocable process—[laughter]—and I have a longer memory and probably more days behind me than ahead—there are some good things about it. And I know that it is a very rare time when a country has so much prosperity, so much social progress, so little internal dissension and relatively distant external threat. And a time like this comes along just once in a while. But it's happening now at a time of breathtaking change. So nothing lasts forever, and a long time is quicker than it used to be.

So this is very, very important. This election this year is just as important as the ones we had in '92 and '96, don't kid yourself. And yet, the danger is, because things seem to be going very well, everybody will take a relaxed attitude. And in fact, you should say, "Goodness gracious, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I'm going to think real hard about what to do with this election."

For me, this kind of opportunity means just one thing: We have the space, the emotional space; we have the money; and we have the knowledge to identify what the big, outstanding challenges are facing this country and what the greatest opportunities are and to actually go after them. In other words, in '93, we were bailing water out of America's boat. Now we have a chance to build the future of our dreams for our children, and

in so doing, I might add, to be a much more responsible and constructive member of the world community.

I appreciate what you said about what we did in Kosovo and Bosnia before, and what we tried to do throughout the world on ethnic and religious and racial conflicts. We have to decide, what are we going to do?

Now, I gave the Congress an agenda that would choke a horse back in my State of the Union Address because I wanted to make the point that we ought to be building the future of our dreams for our children, and that if we let this moment get away from us, if we're at all confused about what the subject of this election is, we'll never forgive ourselves, especially those of us who are old enough to know better.

And I'll just tell you one last little story here. The last time we had a time, which even approximated this was in the mid-sixties, the early sixties. We just celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history, longer than any expansion, including all the ones including our wars. But the last longest economic expansion was during the Vietnam war, 1961 to 1969. But it started in peacetime.

Frankly, I think people—those of us who came of age—I graduated from high school in 1964. We thought the thing would go on forever. I'm telling you, I graduated from high school with an attitude like I am afraid people will take in this election. Oh, I was for all the right things. But I thought the economy would expand forever. I thought the civil rights crisis of America would be resolved in the Congress and the courts, not in the streets. I never dreamed Vietnam would tear this country in two. And neither did most other people, and they didn't think about it when they were voting.

And by the time I got ready to graduate from college in 1968, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection, and just a few months before the longest economic expansion in American history came to a shrieking halt, with not much to show for it.

And I can tell you—I'm not running for anything, you know? [*Laughter*] And pretty soon I'll be Joe Citizen again. I'm telling you, as an American citizen, I have been waiting for 35 long years to see my country once again in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children. And we ought to be doing these big things. That's why I was thrilled all those million moms showed up here yesterday. You know, yes, we've got the lowest crime rate in 25 years. Does anybody think it's low enough? We can make America the safest big country in the world but not if we don't have prevention. And he's taking this issue on, and I appreciate it.

I told somebody the other day, every time we get ready to do something that make sense, the other side screams "gun control," talks about we're infringing on the constitutional right to keep and bear arms. And yesterday I said what I always say, "You know, there's a constitutional right to travel, too." There is. But when we have speed limits and seatbelt laws and child restraint laws and we require drivers to get a drivers' license, you don't hear people standing around on street corner screaming about car control. [*Laughter*] They're talking about highway safety, and we like it, and we wish there were more of it, don't we? Now, if I come get your car and take it away from you, that's car control. Otherwise, it's highway safety. And it's the same thing here.

It's a classic example of what I mean. It's easy to take a pass on a tough issue like that because times are good and your constituents are in a good humor. But it's not the right thing to do. The right thing to do is to say there will never be a better time to take on the big challenges; there will never be a better time to seize the big opportunities. And we need more people in public life who have the kind of mind and the kind of heart that he does. That's why I'm here tonight.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. in the Dining Room at the Hay-Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Wexler's wife, Laurie.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Charles Robb

May 15, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, I want to thank Ron and Beth for having all of us here and for being so generous with their time and their home. However, now that I—you know, I thought I knew them pretty well. I never knew they met at a Chuck Robb fundraiser. *[Laughter]* We ought to put that out. We can raise millions of dollars on this. *[Laughter]* All the lovelorn who can write a check or show up at your fundraisers—this is wonderful. So I want to thank them.

And I want to thank all of you for coming and for supporting Chuck, and in just a minute, I'm going to tell you why. Let me say to all of you, you went through the line and had your picture taken. I appreciate the many nice things you said and especially those of you who expressed your support for my wife, whom I hope will be helping to swell the Democratic majority in the Senate after November.

I want to thank Linda Robb for being our friend for probably 20 years now. We've watched our children grow up together. Chuck and I were Governors together in the early eighties. Out at Camp David I've got this beautiful picture of a carriage from colonial Williamsburg, from the Southern Governors' Association meeting in 1984, that Chuck Robb gave me. So we go back a long way.

And I want to tell you, quite briefly, why I'm here tonight, besides the fact that, yes, I'd show up if Ron and Beth asked me to come, and yes, I'd show up if Chuck and Linda asked me to come. But I passionately believe, number one, that Chuck Robb ought to be reelected, and number two, I believe he will be reelected, and I thought he would be reelected a year ago.

But there is a great question before the American people in this election, very different from the one we faced in 1992, but in some ways, maybe even more important and perhaps even more difficult to answer properly.

In 1992 the American people gave Al Gore and me a chance, but the country was mired in difficulty, and everyone knew that the way

that things were being done in Washington was not working. You remember how it was then; you just took a position on an issue, and there was a position you had to take. If you were a Democrat, you had to take one position. If you were Republican, you had to take the other. And then you just stood off from one another and screamed as loud as you could and hoped you'd get your 10 seconds on the evening news, which might have been good politics but didn't move America forward very much.

So we set about turning the ship of state around. And without being self-serving, I think it's fair to say we did a pretty good job, and things are going in the right direction now. And I think it's one reason to vote for Chuck Robb and for Al Gore, because it wasn't because I was President; it was because we were all doing the right things. And I think that's very important.

I get tickled. You know, some of my adversaries, now that they want to win the election before us, they spent 7 years telling everybody how bad I was; now they say I'm the only guy that jumps higher than Michael Jordan—let's throw the other Democrats out. That has nothing to do with it. We did the right things, and it's very, very important.

So now the question is not, how are we going to turn the ship of state around; how are we going to build our bridge to the 21st century? The question is, what are we going to do with these good times? We never had such good times before. We never had at one time so much economic progress, social progress with the absence of severe domestic distress or external threat. So what are we going to do? That is the issue. And it's a very hard issue for a democracy to answer.

It's easy to get people together when they're under the gun. It's hard to get people together when things are fun. It's easy to be distracted when things seem to be going well. And what I would like to say to you is that I'm old enough to know that nothing lasts forever and that these moments come along once in a generation if you're lucky, and you've got to make the most of them.

I'm also experienced enough in politics to know that our adversaries, both in the Virginia Senate race and the White House, they'll be very adroit at speaking in reassuring

terms and helping to blur the lines of the election. But the truth is, as Senator Robb just said, there are huge consequences to the choices the American people will make. And you have to come to terms with that, as well.

If you want to change the economic policy of the country and go back to the way they did it, you can do it. If you like the way things are going, you've got to vote for Chuck Robb and for the Vice President. If you want someone to do something serious about gun violence, to keep building on the record of the last 7½ years, to keep crime coming down, you can have it. If you want someone who won't touch this issue with a 10-foot pole and won't do anything the NRA doesn't want them to do, you can have that, too. But you've got to make up your mind. And you can't pretend that there are no consequences to this election. There are.

You know, one of the things I really respect about Chuck Robb is, he is a fiscal conservative; he voted with me on that budget, knowing it could beat him in the '94 election. He did not blink; he got up there and voted in '93 for the budget. And if he hadn't voted for it, it would have never passed. You know? But also, after his distinguished career in the United States Marine Corps, he has supported me on every human rights initiative, including gay rights, I have ever advanced. And I respect that more than I can say.

And he has supported sensible efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. Yesterday Hillary and I had—and I like it, because Al Gore and I need some Southern cover, you know. [*Laughter*] I don't know if you saw it, but there was a picture in the paper that said, "gunnery sergeant for responsible gun control"—it was a great sign, yesterday at this thing.

You know, I just want to take a minute. This is a big choice you've got in the election. You've got to decide. But don't let anybody you know pretend that they're voting—the Senate race or the President's race isn't about what our policy is with regard to safety, public safety, or pretend that it's not about our policy with regard to human rights or pretend that it's not about our policy with regard to economics and whether you like having this surplus and you want to get America out of debt and keep investing in education or

you'd rather go back and try it the way it was.

Now, there will be a great attempt to blur all this. I'm telling you, those are three inescapable consequences of this election and your choice. Will we change economic policy? Will we continue to try to make America a safer country and have responsible measures to promote gun safety? Will we continue to advance the cause of human rights? And the fourth inescapable consequence is, will we continue to grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time or let the old way prevail, and say the heck with that?

Now, there is no doubt about that. But you've got to decide. But don't let—if somebody asks you why you came here tonight, tell them because Chuck Robb played an inextricable role in the progress of the last 7 years, because you think there are choices that matter in this election, because you want to stand up for somebody that had as much courage in the United States Senate as he did in the toughest battles in Vietnam.

And I told him a year ago, when he was way behind in the polls, he was going to be reelected. And I believe it more strongly today. But we need your help. And you watch now—I've been watching this a long time. If you take this position, you will find all these people that will try to turn this election into Jell-o. And you will think you're punching a little sort of a pillow bag there. And everybody will say, "Oh, there aren't really significant differences, and I think I'll give the other guys a chance." That's not true. And you cannot afford to let people decide too late that there are great consequences here.

So I thank you for coming. You will rarely in your life get a chance to support anybody who has taken more chances to do what he thought was right, sometimes when he agreed with me and sometimes when he didn't, but always had his heart and mind and spirit in the same place as this man. He's a good man. His wife is a magnificent woman, and they deserve this reaffirmation, and our country needs it. That's the most important thing.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Ronald I. Dozoretz and Beth Dozoretz; and Senator Robb's wife, Linda.

Remarks on Prescription Drug Coverage for Military Retirees and an Exchange With Reporters

May 16, 2000

Resignation of Helen Thomas

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Before we start, I would just like to say a few words of appreciation and respect about Helen Thomas, who has decided today to leave UPI after 57 years.

Presidents come and go, but Helen's been here for 40 years now, covering eight Presidents and, doubtless, showing the ropes to countless young reporters and, I might add, more than a few press secretaries. I hope this change will bring new rewards and new fulfillment to her. Whatever she decides to do, I know I'll feel a little better about my country if I know she'll still be spending some time around here at the White House. After all, without her saying, "Thank you, Mr. President," at least some of us might never have ended our news conferences.

Prescription Drug Coverage

When I gave my State of the Union Address this year, I said that in good conscience we could not let another year pass without finding a way to offer voluntary prescription drug coverage to every older American. I think we're beginning to make progress toward that goal. And today I want to support one step in the right direction, a congressional proposal, scheduled for a vote this week in the House, to extend prescription drug coverage to all retired military personnel over 65.

Keeping faith with men and women in America who have served in our armed forces is a sacred obligation for all of us. That's why we have raised military pay over 8 percent over the last 2 years, why we're working to provide our troops with better housing, and taking steps to improve access to medical care for all military personnel, families, and retirees. We asked them to risk

their lives for freedom, and in return, we pledged our support.

Part of that promise is a medical network that helps to provide prescription drugs at reasonable costs. Some senior retirees are able now to take advantage of that network. But they're out of reach for as many as three of four of them.

This proposal would make sure that we meet our promise to more than one million older military retirees across the Nation, providing every single one of them with a prescription drug benefit, sharing with them the price discounts that the military negotiates with drug companies. At a time of unprecedented prosperity, there is no reason for military retirees to go without these prescription drugs that they need to live longer and healthier lives. We need to show them that they count, and they can count on us.

This initiative is another step for finding a way to offer every older American voluntary prescription drug coverage and affordable prescription drugs. That ought to be our next goal, because today, more than three in five American seniors lack such coverage. Too many spend huge percentages of their income on prescription drugs. Too many have to choose every month between filling those prescriptions and filling grocery carts. Too many are simply not getting the medicine they need.

If we were creating Medicare today, as I have said over and over and over again, we certainly would include a prescription drug benefit to give older Americans and people with disabilities access to the most cost-effective health care. Prescription drugs help to keep seniors mobile and healthy. They help to prevent expensive hospital stays and surgical procedures. They promote the dignity that every retired person is entitled to—the quality of life all of us want for our own parents. We should act this year to make sure all seniors have access to such coverage.

In my budget, I proposed a comprehensive plan to provide a Medicare benefit that is optional, affordable, and available to all, based on price competition, not price controls; a plan to boost seniors' bargaining power to get the best prices possible, just as this military plan would; a plan that is part

of an overall effort to strengthen and modernize Medicare so that we won't have to ask our children to shoulder the burden of the baby boomers' retirement.

I'm glad there is growing bipartisan support for providing this coverage to all beneficiaries. Both sides say they want to get it done. Unfortunately, I still believe that the proposals put forward by the congressional majority will not achieve the goal. They'd provide no assistance to middle income seniors, nearly half of all those who now lack coverage. They'd subsidize private insurance plans that the industry itself says it will not offer. This will not get the job done.

But the bipartisan spirit of this proposal for military retirees shows us the way forward for all retirees. In reaching out to extend coverage to older military retirees, Congress has recognized that high prescription drug costs are a burden for every senior and that we owe every military retiree a dignified and healthy retirement.

Both parties now have agreed that prescription drug coverage should be available and affordable to older Americans. We can, surely, come to an agreement on the details of how to do this. We all want our seniors, all of them, to live longer, healthier lives. And I'm very glad that here, as so often before, our armed forces are leading the way.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, on——

Q. Mr. President, you——

The President. I'll take them both. Go ahead.

Q. Mr. President, you seem to be having a prescription drug event each week, now. Is it safe for us to assume that this is the one piece of what would be historical legislation—historic legislation—that you would like to sign on behalf of your legacy?

The President. No. It's safe for you to assume that I think there's a fair chance we could pass this, and I think it's the right thing to do for America. The Congress will have a chance to cast any number of profoundly important votes, including the vote on China and the trade relations. And I hope they'll do the right thing on each and every one.

But you know, my philosophy has always been the same in election years as in off-years. I think that we owe it to the American

people to govern, to do as much together as we can in good conscience, secure in the knowledge that no matter how much we get done there will still be significant areas of disagreement between the two parties, beginning with our Presidential candidates and extending to the Senate and the House candidates, on which we can have a marvelous election and a rousing debate.

So, do I want to get this done? Absolutely, I do. But I want to do it because we have the money to do it now and we know how to do it and because the people need it.

Go ahead.

Interest Rates

Q. Sir, on the economy, are you concerned that if the Fed Chairman's efforts to slow this economy down have the desired effect, it might negatively impact the Vice President's campaign going into the November election and really give the Republican challenger some ammunition to go after Mr. Gore with?

The President. No, because what we've done is to minimize inflation by paying down the debt and keeping our markets open. And I think that if anything, the Chairman of the Fed has made it clear that if you had a huge tax cut, it would cause even higher interest rate increases. So I think—you know, the Fed will do its job, and we will do ours. And I'm going to let them make whatever decision that Chairman Greenspan and the others think is warranted.

But I think it should remind us all of the wisdom of continuing to pay down the debt, because the more we pay down the debt, the more we'll keep interest rates as low as they can, the more we'll keep inflation down. It's also a good argument for passing the normal trade relations with China and continuing to expand our trade.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President—excuse me—poll after poll continues to show that Governor Bush is ahead of Vice President Gore. Do you think his campaign strategy, the Vice President's, is working?

The President. I don't want to comment on the campaign. It's a long time before it's

over, and I think that in these elections the fundamentals tend to take over, and the American people tend to take the measure of both the candidates, especially in the course of the debates. And you know, I trust them to make the decision. I don't have anything to comment about that.

Q. Sir, are you a registered voter in New York, sir?

Q. Mr. President, on—

The President. Go ahead, I'm sorry.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Q. Mr. President, on the Chinese vote, how are you doing? And could you elaborate on your statements of the other day that China could still get WTO membership, and the U.S. would be hurt if the Congress doesn't pass it?

The President. Sure. China could get into the WTO and will get into the WTO, but the United States would not be able to claim the benefits of the agreement we negotiated. So all those big cuts in agricultural tariffs, all that right to sell automobiles in China without putting plants up there or transferring technology, all the access to what will clearly be the biggest telecommunications market in the world—all those benefits we negotiated will go to the Europeans, the Japanese, and others who will be in a position to take advantage of them.

So that, it seems to me, is clear. You can't—if they go in, they have to be accepted on membership terms that apply to everyone else, and that's fair, because we expect them to follow the rules that apply to everyone else. And therefore, any nation that withholds those membership terms doesn't get the benefit of the agreement that was negotiated. And it would be quite significant.

Q. How hard are you finding this China trade fight? And when you meet one-on-one with Democrats, are they saying they're just facing terrific pressure from the labor unions? Are you losing some of those one-on-ones? And what's your prediction for the outcome?

The President. I'm losing some and getting some. My view is that in the end it will pass, not only because the economic benefits are clear and overwhelming but in a larger

sense, because the national security interests are so clear.

Let me just say again, I think it's quite interesting that for all the differences the Taiwanese and the Chinese have had, and the tensions between them, everyone, beginning with the President-elect of Taiwan, wants us to approve China going into the WTO. Why is that? They think it's good for them economically, but in a larger sense, they think it will reduce tensions along the Taiwan Straits and maximize the chance that the Chinese and the people of Taiwan will have a chance to work out their differences in a peaceful way, which is consistent with over 20 years of American policy. I think it's interesting that Martin Lee came all the way over here from Hong Kong, a man who cannot even legally go to China, who has never met the Premier of China, to say to us, we had to support this because China had to be brought into a system that extols the rule of law. And that was the beginning of liberty.

I think it's interesting that Chinese dissidents in China, people who have been subject to abuses we would never tolerate in our country, whose phones have been tapped, who can't sponsor public events, still implore us to support this, because they know it is the beginning of the rule of law and change in China, and ironic that the people in China who do not want us to vote for this are those that hope they will have a standoff with us and continuing control at home, the more reactionary elements in the military and in the state-owned industries.

So I think the national security arguments are so overwhelming that, notwithstanding the pressures, and especially given the economic realities of this agreement, in the end that Congress will do the right thing. I believe they will.

Q. Mr. President, Charlie Rangel came out today and said he's going to go ahead and support normalizing trade relations with China. Can you tell us how you feel about that, and how it may affect other Democrats?

The President. Well, I think it's an enormously important decision by Mr. Rangel. If we're successful in the elections in November in the House, then he would become the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. I think his decision will affect other

Members on the Committee. And I think if we're fortunate enough to get a majority of Democrats on the Committee to vote for this, because of Charles Rangel's leadership and because some of the others are already come out, that surely will have an effect on our caucus, because they are in the best position to understand the economic issues involved here. And I think it's an immensely important thing.

And I think if this passes, combined with the bill for Africa and Caribbean Basin trade, which was passed with overwhelming majorities last week, this Congress will build quite a legacy for itself in this area, and one that would be well-deserved for members of both parties that vote for it.

New York State Democratic Convention

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us how you came to the decision to go up to New York tonight, and any thoughts you have on seeing the First Lady nominated?

The President. I just decided I ought to be there. I mean, it's a big deal for her, a big night for her, and I want to be there with her. I just want to be there to support her. And I also—a secondary but important consideration for me is it's Senator Moynihan's, kind of his farewell address to the people in New York who have elevated him to the Senate and given him the chance to serve our country in a remarkable way. I'd like to hear what he has to say as well.

But mostly, I just wanted to be with Hillary tonight. It's a big night for her, and I just started working on my schedule today to see if I could go.

President's Voters Registration

Q. Are you yet registered to vote in New York, Mr. President?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. Are you yet registered to vote in New York?

The President. No. But I intend to register so I can vote for her in November.

You know, this was a—Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio], this was kind of a difficult issue. I just voted in the last school election in Little Rock a few days ago. And for me, it's hard, you know, on a personal basis. But this is a commitment that we made

together. And it's something that she wanted to do and a lot of people in New York wanted her to do, and I want to support her in every way I can. And I certainly intend to vote for her. And since I'm a tax-paying resident of New York now, I'm entitled to vote, and I intend to take advantage of it.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, on guns, I know you didn't want to talk about the campaign in general terms, but there are a lot of polls that shows Bush is doing as well or even better than Mr. Gore on the issue of guns. How can that be? What's your take on that?

The President. The people don't know what their respective positions are. You know, one of the things I said here on Sunday morning, before the Million Mom March, is that I think we'd lose, particularly in how people vote on this issue, if it gets muddled in rhetoric; and we win, if people know what the specifics are. And this just—and that's often true about issues in America.

If you say, do you want more gun control or not, or you want the Government to control guns more, we'd probably win that, but it would be close. If you say, do you believe we should close the gun show loophole and ban large capacity ammunition clips from being imported and require child trigger locks, or should we have people who buy handguns get a photo ID license showing they passed the Brady background check and a safety course, then I think we'd win.

And I think that it's really interesting—it's very instructive to compare this with automobiles. The NRA always talks about the right to keep and bear arms. Well, the Supreme Court says there's a constitutional right to travel, enshrined in and guaranteed by the Constitution. And when we have speed limits, seatbelt laws, child safety restraint laws, and drivers have to get licenses, nobody talks about car control in ominous terms. You don't hear all the "there's a big threat of car control out there."

Now, if I come get your car, park it in my backyard, that's car control. Otherwise, it's highway safety. And I have not proposed to confiscate the gun or take away the gun or the right to hunt or sport shoot or even to have a gun in self-defense for any law-

abiding American. I have not made any proposals. Neither to the best of my knowledge has anyone else in Congress. So what we're talking about is gun safety legislation to keep guns away from criminals and other people who shouldn't have them, and out of the hands of kids.

So my view is that as this debate unfolds, and we have a chance to debate the specifics—and I hope we'll do it in a civilized fashion. I really enjoyed—I did one of the morning programs last week, and there were people on both sides of the issues there. And we actually had a chance to talk specifics, and some of them made a couple suggestions that I agreed with. And I think that surprised them.

I think we need to get down to the specifics here and get away from the labeling, and I think it will turn out just fine. The American people will make the right decision on this if we give them a chance to.

Social Security

Q. Sir, Senator Moynihan, who you mentioned, Senator Bob Kerrey, many of the Democrats from the DLC wing of the party, like yourself, have suggested changes to Social Security not unlike those outlined by Governor Bush. Yet the Vice President says the Governor would “destroy” the program. Would Democrats like those recommend changes that would destroy Social Security?

The President. Well, I'm not sure they are the same. And you know, I saw a headline in the paper today that said that the Governor's campaign had released more details on Social Security and Medicare, and I need the chance to study them before I do.

I do think—I will say again, to get something done on this in the longer term, you need a bipartisan solution. And it's going to have to come out of the Congress. And I had hoped we could get it done this year.

But let me just caution you. You have to see all this stuff together. I'll say—you know, one thing people all over America ask me is, “What did you do different on the economy that changed America?” And I always say, only half-jokingly, “We brought arithmetic back to Washington.”

So what you need to do on this is, for purposes of analysis, is take the projected reve-

nues over the next decade, when they get—you know, and they'll be written up some when the so-called mid-session review comes out, because we've had more growth this year than was anticipated—subtract the size of both candidates' proposed tax cuts, take the Social Security program and see what the so-called transition costs are and then the other differences in spending in defense and education vouchers and what's inflation going to be, see what you've got left and whether you can pay for it, and then what do you think the chances are that we won't have this much robust revenue growth over the last 10 years, and don't you have to have some sort of guard against that, and then evaluate where it is.

We need to—I think it's going to be a good thing that we'll have a Social Security debate. But keep in mind, the people who want these private accounts, they argue two things. One is, we ought to have a higher rate of return on Social Security because it's going to go broke in 2034. Two is, we ought to give more Americans a chance to share in the wealth of the country with private savings.

Now, what I argued back is that if you take the interest savings that we get from paying down the debt because of the Social Security tax—just that that comes from the Social Security tax; so arguably, that's a savings that you're entitled to as a payer of the Social Security tax—if you put that into the Trust Fund, you get it up to 2054, for probably no more cost than the transition costs would be. That is, if you let the people start taking money out of the Trust Fund, obviously, and you guarantee the rights of the retirees that are here, you've got to put something back in from somewhere.

Then what I suggested, that did not find favor with the Congress, was that we have some means of letting the Trust Fund as a whole benefit from the markets, up to about 15 percent of the Trust Fund. That would increase the rate of return. And then remember, the year before last I proposed a very ambitious program—and I proposed a more modified, income-limited program this year—that would have the Government support private savings and wealth creation outside the Social Security system by individual citizens. I still think that's the safer way to

go, and we could easily get the Social Security Trust Fund out beyond the life of the baby boom generation just by doing that.

So we've got a chance now to have a big debate. I haven't seen the Medicare proposals, but I think that we've got to be particularly careful with that. We've added 24 or 25 years to the life of the Medicare Trust Fund since I've been here, and we need to put some more time on that, and do the drug issue. And there are some—I've proposed some structural reforms, but we need to be careful with that.

But just—let me just say, there are four or five different variations that I've seen of people who have proposed various kinds of private accounts. So I think it's important—again, you've got to get behind the labels to the facts and see how everybody's proposal works. And that would be my advice on that. I think the way we're—the safer way is to take it the way we've done, and it would achieve the other two objectives. That is, you could get a higher rate of return on the Social Security Fund, and you could open savings and wealth-creation opportunities for individual Americans, without actually privatizing the fund itself and running some of the risks that are inherent in that.

But that's a debate the American people will get a chance to resolve, if they get together and discuss it, and if they flesh out their ideas. I think it's an important debate to have.

Tobacco Regulation

Q. Mr. President, what was your reaction to the first McCain tobacco regulation bill, that gives the FDA direct authority to regulate tobacco products?

The President. Well, you know, I think they should have that authority.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. In your discussions with House Speaker Hastert last week on Patients' Bill of Rights, what assurances were you given that he's willing to support some form of coverage for everyone?

The President. He said that that was his position. And I must say, so far he's been as good as his word on everything he said.

Now, we do have some differences there. You know, he admitted that we still don't have the liability issues worked out, and we've got some other issues to resolve. But I think he wants legislation to pass, in this area and in the new markets area, which is terribly important. Again, that's something that could change the face of America. It could give us a chance to bring free enterprise to poor areas in a way that we've never tried to do before as a nation and to go beyond, even, what we've done with the empowerment zones, which has been quite successful.

So we were just talking, and that's what he said. And I've found that when he says something, he normally means it—or he always means it when he's talked to me.

Prescription Drug Coverage

Q. Sir, on prescription drugs, isn't this similar to a measure that you told the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs that you couldn't afford to put into an already bulging FY 2001 defense budget? And how is it that that measure can be afforded now by Members of Congress?

The President. Well, for one thing, when they—no. What happened is, after I had already presented the budget, they asked me about it. And I pointed out that under our program all the military retirees would be covered by a system very similar to this legislation. But I'm certainly not opposed to the military retirees being covered.

I think that the real question is, how can the Congress, in good conscience, provide this coverage in the same way—actually, the mechanism works just like what I want to do to cover all seniors. How can they do this and say they're not going to do it for people in the same situation in the rest of the country, the other senior population, when we can do it and do it with the same sort of mechanism that they provide here?

So I'm fine for them to do this, and if they do it in this way and then they pass the other, then the cost of the other program will be diminished if—for the military retirees who stay in this program. In other words, they're not going to be in both programs buying the same drugs twice.

So what I said was, I didn't—I had already presented the budget and that all military retirees would be covered in my program, along with all other seniors. But now that Congress is doing this, I think that this ought to be evidence that they understand, A, that people over 65 need this coverage and, B, that this is a good kind of mechanism to guarantee that they get the medicine at affordable prices.

Thank you.

Colombia

Q. Mr. President, are you worried about Colombia aid? Mr. President, the aid to Colombia?

The President. Well, it's funny, I talked to General McCaffrey about it this morning, actually. At this time I'm not worried about it, but I think it's important, given the continuing difficulties and challenges the Government in Colombia is facing, that it pass as soon as possible. We need to send a signal to those people down there who are fighting for democracy, fighting for freedom, fighting for the rule of law, fighting against the narcotraffickers, fighting against terrorism, that we're on their side.

And we also need to signal to them that there is an alternative economic way that the people can make a living who've been caught up in the drug trade kind of at the grassroots farmer level. And this bill does that, so that I think in the end, Congress will pass this bill. But I hope it can be put on some bill I'll get as quick as possible so we can send the right signal in a very timely fashion. I just don't want it dragged out another 3 or 4 months. I think it would be a really bad mistake in terms of our national security interests, not just in Colombia but throughout the Andean region. People are looking at us to see if we're really going to make a serious commitment.

It also will help Colombia to get the other support it needs from the international institutions, from other countries, to make a stand there, and in the process, hopefully, to see victory there for a democratic government and the rule of law, a reduction in drug production and exports, and a stabilization of the democracies that surround Colombia in the Andean region.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:09 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji of China.

Memorandum on Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by the Fires in the Los Alamos Area

May 16, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by the Fires in the Los Alamos Area

I am deeply concerned about the devastating losses suffered by many as a result of the fires in the Los Alamos, New Mexico, area. Many parts of the Federal Government have been mobilized to respond to this disaster.

As part of this effort, I ask the heads of executive departments and agencies to excuse from duty without charge to leave or loss of pay those Federal civilian employees who are affected by the fires in the Los Alamos area and their aftermath and who can be spared from their usual responsibilities. Specifically, I request that excused absence be granted to employees who are needed for emergency law enforcement, relief, or clean-up efforts authorized by Federal, State, or other officials having jurisdiction and employees who are prevented from reporting for work or faced with a personal emergency because of the fires and their aftermath.

I am also authorizing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to determine whether there is a need to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by this major disaster. An emergency leave transfer program would permit employees in an executive agency to donate their unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies who were adversely affected by the fires in the Los Alamos area and who need additional time off for recovery. If the need for donated annual leave becomes evident, I direct the

OPM to establish the emergency leave transfer program and provide additional information to agencies on the program's administration.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

**Remarks at a Reception Following
the New York State Democratic
Convention in Albany, New York
May 16, 2000**

First of all, I want you to know how I came to be here tonight. [*Inaudible*]*—*but before we knew exactly when Hillary was going to give her speech, I agreed to appear tonight at the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund and to a campaign event for the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee. So I told all that group, I said, "I've been with you folks a long time, and if you'll let me go hear my wife give a speech, I'll do any event you want, anywhere in America, any time." [*Laughter*] And I told the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee that the Senate campaign I was most interested in was otherwise occupied tonight, and I was going there. [*Laughter*]

So I'm delighted to see you. And I want to thank Judith Hope for doing a wonderful job as the chair. A lot of you don't know this, but Judith Hope grew up in Warren, Arkansas, in a community that I never failed to carry as Governor, proof positive that people from Arkansas can do very well in New York.

I want to thank all the leaders of Congress and the State legislature and your State officials who are here with me tonight, and my good friend Andrew Cuomo, for the wonderful job he's done as our HUD Secretary.

I want to ask you one question. Did Hillary give a great speech tonight? I was sitting next to Senator Moynihan, and she kept going over all these issues. And Senator Moynihan looked at me, and he said, "Good speech." [*Laughter*] "Now, that would be like the rest of us who—[*inaudible*]*—*into the Gettysburg Address." [*Laughter*] And I knew that she was on a roll.

I want to say three things very quickly. First of all, I do not have the words to express to the people of New York my gratitude for the primary victory in '92, for the magnificent convention in '92, for the overwhelming margin of victory in '92, and the even bigger margin of victory you gave to me and to Al Gore in 1996. I will never forget it.

The second thing I want to say is that I am profoundly grateful to you for the way you have embraced Hillary and the way you supported her tonight and the way you have been helping her. And I thank you for that. But I can tell you this, that she will not disappoint you. She'll be one of the great Senators this country has ever—[*applause*].

And the last thing I want to say is this. On this night we've had a lot of fun. And big tests facing New York and America is what are we going to do with this magic moment of prosperity we have all worked so hard for? And a moment like this imposes a test on people just as severe as great adversity does. When we were flat on our back in the Depression and we elected Franklin Roosevelt President, we did in part out of desperation. We knew we had to have somebody who was upbeat and strong and who would try new things.

When I was elected President in 1992, the American people took a huge chance. I was just, as President Bush used to say, the Governor of a small southern State. [*Laughter*] And I was so dumb and inexperienced, I thought he was complimenting me. I was kind of proud of it. [*Laughter*]

But we were feeling rather desperate, and now we feel good. But I was so proud by the response you gave Hillary tonight, because this is a great test for us. And make no mistake about it, this election in 2000 is every bit as important as the election in '96 was, every bit as important as the election in '92 was. I worked so hard for 8 years with clearly the finest and most effective Vice President in the history of the United States to turn this country around.

Now we've got a campaign, and the people have to choose. And the Republicans are telling us they're compassionate. [*Laughter*] And they're saying, "I'm for all the same things that they're for, we're just doing it a little different. And we want to give you a whole

lot bigger tax cut. We'll give you everything else you ever dreamed of." And it's all sort of being blurred.

What I want to tell you is if you believe the things that Hillary said, that you clapped for tonight, if you believe that she's worth fighting for, then you have to believe me. I'm not running for anything—[*laughter*]—but I know a little something about American history. It may be 30, it may be 50, it may be 80 or 100 years before our country ever has so much prosperity, so much social progress, so little internal crisis and external threat as we have today. We are being tested as surely as if we were in the middle of war or a depression. And we are being tested.

It's easy for us to be distracted. And I'm telling you, if you want this to go on, if you want to continue to change in this direction, you've got to elect Al Gore; you've got to elect Hillary; you've got to elect these Democrats who have supported this direction. I will do my best to be a supporting part in that.

The next Senator of New York, my wife.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 p.m. in the Ten Eyck Ballroom at the Crown Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Commencement Address at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut

May 17, 2000

Thank you very much. Secretary Slater, Admiral Loy, Rear Admiral Teeson, Captain Dillon, Senator Dodd, distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, Dr. Haas, members of the faculty and staff, and honored guests—the friends, family, and members of the class of 2000.

I want to begin by complimenting Cadet Christopher Burrus on what I thought was a remarkable speech showing the devotion to the Coast Guard and the country that every American can be proud of.

I would also like to thank the family members who are here for standing behind these cadets for 4 years and for making it possible for them to be here.

This is a highly appropriate place for me to give what is, for me, a very nostalgic address. It is the last speech I will ever give as President to a graduating class of one of our military service academies.

This class came to Washington and marched in my second Inaugural Parade. I pledged to use this term to build a bridge to the 21st century. And in so many ways, the first class of the 21st century represents that bridge.

I have been personally, deeply indebted to the Coast Guard because of the military aides I have had every year I've been President who are Coast Guard officer. The last one, Pat DeQuattro, class of '88, is here with me today. They have all been outstanding people, and it made me think more and more of the Coast Guard.

You can be proud of the road you have traveled from Swab Summer to today. You've survived academic rigors, countless games of football and volleyball against officers, even golf balls and dog food in the wardroom. For those of you who, like me, are somewhat less literate in these matters, that is cadet-speak for hard-boiled eggs and corned beef hash. [*Laughter*]

You have, as we have heard, done extraordinary volunteer work. You placed first among universities at one of America's most prestigious national science competitions. You engineered Solar Splash, the top-ranked solar-powered boat in the Nation this year. Four of your classmates were all-American athletes, and one of your classmates even found fame and fortune on "The Price is Right." [*Laughter*]

I can't help noting that you were also the first class in history to have an adviser who had a recurring role on "Baywatch." [*Laughter*] Now, Eric Kowack chose to give up that difficult duty, come back, and teach classes on personal finance for those of you who don't become TV stars. [*Laughter*]

I have been told that your spirit as a class is so strong that this class received more letters from opposing class presidents complaining about heckling at soccer games than any other class in the history of this academy. [*Laughter*] It's really nice to know you feel bad about it. [*Laughter*] I don't know if any of you got in trouble for that, but pursuant

to long-standing tradition, I hereby grant amnesty to all candidates marching tours or serving restrictions for such minor offenses.

As the first Coast Guard class of the 21st century, you will face a new set of challenges to America's security, values, and interests, though your mission will be consistent with the long and storied history of America's defenders. The waters off this shore have seen a lot of that history.

In the West Wing of the White House, just a few feet from the Oval Office, there's a painting of the first naval battle of the War of 1812 that happened off the coast of New London. That day a British frigate called the *Belvidera* was chased by five American warships. You might be interested to know that three of those ships were named the *President*, the *United States*, and the *Congress*. History tells us the *President* was the fastest ship. [Laughter] But unfortunately, the *Belvidera* got away anyway, because at a crucial moment the *President* suffered significant damage. We're not sure exactly what caused it, but I am curious to know where *Congress* was at the time. [Laughter]

I ask you to compare that picture with the picture to be painted in these same waters this summer, when the *Eagle* leads ships from more than 60 nations, including our adversary in 1812, Great Britain, into New London Harbor, the biggest, broadest gathering of its kind in history, a strong symbol of the global age in which you will serve.

It is a wonderful sign of these times that two of the cadets who graduate in this class today come from Russia and Bulgaria, nations that were our adversaries when they were in elementary school, and neither they nor we think twice about it. We know it's a good thing.

Globalization is tearing down barriers and building new networks among nations and people. The process is accelerated by the fact that more than half the world's people live in democracies for the first time in history, and by the explosive advance in information technology that is changing the way we all do business, including the Coast Guard.

Just for example, a mere decade ago a cadet assigned to a buoy tender had to go through an elaborate process to place the buoys. Three people would stand back-to-

back, tracking horizontal sextant angles, and then comparing those readings to hand-drawn navigational grids—with a lot of yelling back and forth. Today, all that work is done instantly by satellites and computers through the Global Positioning System.

The very openness of our borders and technology, however, also makes us vulnerable in new ways. The same technology that gave us GPS and the marvelous possibilities of the Internet also apparently empowered a student sitting in the Philippines to launch a computer virus that in just a few hours spread through more than 10 million computers and caused billions of dollars in damage.

The central reality of our time is that the advent of globalization and the revolution in information technology have magnified both the creative and the destructive potential of every individual, tribe, and nation on our planet.

Now, most of us have a vision of the 21st century. It sees the triumph of peace, prosperity, and personal freedom through the power of the Internet, the spread of the democracy, the potential of science as embodied in the human genome project and the probing of the deepest mysteries of nature, from the dark holes of the universe to the dark floors of the ocean.

But we must understand the other side of the coin, as well. The same technological advances are making the tools of destruction deadlier, cheaper, and more available. Making us more vulnerable to problems that arise half a world away, to terror, to ethnic, racial, and religious conflicts, to weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, and other organized crime.

Today, and for the foreseeable tomorrows, we, and especially you, will face a fateful struggle between the forces of integration and harmony and the forces of disintegration and chaos. The phenomenal explosion of technology can be a servant of either side or, ironically, both. Of course, our traditional security concerns have by no means vanished. Still we must manage our relationships with great and potentially great powers in ways that protect and advance our interests. We must continue to maintain strong alliances, to have the best trained, best

equipped military in the world, to be vigilant that regional conflicts do not threaten us.

In this scenario, one of the biggest question marks of the 21st century is the path China will take. Will China emerge as a partner or an adversary? Will it be a society that is opening to the world and liberating to its people or controlling of its people and lashing out at the world?

Next week the Congress and the United States will have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to influence that question in the right way. There are brave people in China today working for human rights and political freedom. There are brave people within the Government of China today willing to risk opening the Chinese economy knowing that it will unleash forces of change they cannot control.

For example, in a country of 1.3 billion people, 2 years ago there were just 2 million Internet users. Last year there were 9 million. This year there will be over 20 million. When over 100 million people in China can get on the net, it will be impossible to maintain a closed political and economic society.

If Congress votes to normalize trade relations with China, it will not guarantee that China will take the right course. But it will certainly increase the likelihood that it will. If Congress votes no, it will strengthen the hand, ironically, of the very people the opponents of this agreement claim to fight. It will strengthen the hands of the reactionary elements in the military and the state-owned industries who want America for an opponent, to justify their continued control and adherence to the old ways and repression of personal freedom.

I believe that a no vote invites a future of dangerous confrontations and constant insecurity. It also, by the way, forfeits the largest market in the world for our goods and services and gives Europe and Japan all those benefits we negotiated to bring American jobs here at home.

Granting China permanent normal trading relations, it's clearly in our economic interests. But from your point of view, even more important, it is a national security issue for stability in Asia, peace in the Taiwan Straits, possible cooperation with China to advance freedom and human rights within the country and to retard the proliferation of dan-

gerous weapons technology beyond it. It is profoundly important to America's continued leadership in the world. That's why all former Presidents, without regard to party, as well as former Secretaries of State, Defense, Transportation, Trade, National Security Advisers, Chairs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, support this legislation.

It illustrates a larger issue I want you to think about today, which is the importance of a balanced security strategy with military, diplomatic, and economic elements. I have worked hard to adapt our security strategy to the 21st century world, with all its possibilities and threats. Last year, as part of that effort, I asked the task force to conduct a fresh look at the roles and missions of the Coast Guard. What are you going to do in this new world anyway? The task force found that a flexible, highly motivated Coast Guard continues to be vital to our security.

We often see, personally, our reliance on the Coast Guard during floods in North Carolina, after Hurricane Floyd, after the tragedies of EgyptAir and Air Alaska. Today, in the average week, you and your fellow coasties will seize more than \$60 million worth of dangerous drugs, board 630 vessels for safety checks, intercept hundreds of illegal immigrants, investigate 119 marine accidents, respond to more than 260 hazardous chemical spills, assist more than 2,500 people in distress, and save 100 lives. And the more we travel and the more we are connected together, the more those responsibilities and opportunities for service will rise.

So your class will play an even larger role in defending and advancing America's security. It is very important to me, as the Commander in Chief, that each and every one of you understand the threats we face and what we should do to meet them.

First, international terrorism is not new, but it is becoming increasingly sophisticated. Terrorist networks communicate on the World Wide Web, too. Available weapons are becoming more destructive and more miniaturized, just as the size of cell phones and computers is shrinking—shrinking to the point where a lot of you with large hands like mine wonder if you'll be able to work

the things before long. You should understand that the same process of miniaturization will find its way into the development of biological and chemical and maybe even nuclear weapons. And it is something we have to be ready for.

As borders fade and old regimes struggle through transitions, the chance for free agents looking to make a profit on weapons of destruction and personal chaos is greater. In this sort of environment, cooperation is profoundly important—more vital than ever. We learned that in the days leading up to the millennium.

We are joined today by the Ambassador from Jordan to the United States, Dr. Marwan Muasher. He's sitting here behind me. He's an excellent representative of his country. And I want to tell you a story that, unfortunately, will not be the last example you will have to face.

Last December, working with Jordan, we shut down a plot to place large bombs at locations where Americans might gather on New Year's Eve. We learned this plot was linked to terrorist camps in Afghanistan and the organization created by Usama bin Ladin, the man responsible for the 1998 bombings of our embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, which cost the lives of Americans and hundreds of Africans.

A short time later, a customs agent in Seattle discovered bomb materials being smuggled in to the U.S., the same materials used by bin Ladin in other places. Thankfully, and thanks to Jordan, New Year's passed without an attack. But the threat was real, and we had to cooperate with them, with the Canadians, with others throughout the world.

So the first point I wish to make is, in a globalized world, we must have more security cooperation, not less. In responding to terrorist threats, our own strategy should be identical to your motto: *Semper paratus*—always ready.

Today I'm adding over \$300 million to fund critical programs to protect our citizens from terrorist threats, to expand our intelligence efforts, to improve our ability to use forensic evidence, to track terrorists, to enhance our coordination with State and local officials, as we did over New Year's, to protect our Nation against possible attacks. I

have requested now some \$9 billion for counterterrorism funding in the 2001 budget. That's 40 percent more than 3 years ago, and this \$300 million will go on top of that. It sounds like a lot of money. When you see the evidence of what we're up against, I think you will support it, and I hope you will.

We also have to do all we can to protect existing nuclear weapons from finding new owners. To keep nuclear weapons and nuclear materials secure at the source, we've helped Russia to deactivate about 5,000 warheads, to strengthen border controls and keep weapons expertise from spreading. But Russia's economic difficulties have made this an even greater challenge.

Just for example, I know you know that when you decided to become a Coast Guard officer, you made a decision that you would not be wealthy. But let me give you some basis of comparison. The average salary today of a highly trained weapons scientist in Russia is less than \$100 a month. Needless to say, there are a lot of people who'd like to develop nuclear weapons capability who are out there trying to hire those folks.

The programs that we fund in joint endeavors to secure the Russian nuclear force and the materials and to do other kinds of joint research help to give such scientists a decent living to support their families. And I think we have to do even more to help them turn their expertise to peaceful projects. We shouldn't just depend upon their character to resist the temptation to earn a living wage with all of their knowledge and education. And we have asked Congress for extra funding here to help Russia keep its arsenal of nuclear weapons secure.

Still, we have to face the possibility that a hostile nation, sooner or later, may well acquire weapons of mass destruction and the missiles necessary to deliver them to our shores. That's what this whole debate over whether we should have a limited national missile defense is all about. Later this year, I will decide whether we should begin to deploy it next spring, based on four factors that I will have to take into account.

First, has this technology really proved it will work? Second, what does it cost, and how do we balance that cost against our other defense priorities? Third, how far advanced is

the threat; how likely is it that another nation could deliver long-range ballistic missiles to our shore within 3 years, 5 years, 10 years—what is the time frame? And finally, what impact will it have on our overall security, including our arms control efforts in other areas, our relationships with our allies in other countries around the world?

I also want you to know, as I said earlier, we've got to be ready for the prospect of biological and chemical warfare. We saw that in the sarin gas attack in Japan 4 years ago. We've established a national defense preparedness office to train first responders, using new technology to improve our ability to detect these agents quickly. And we're doing all we can to see that poison gas and biological weapons are, in fact, eliminated from the face of the Earth.

We have to do the same when it comes to problems in cyber security. Today, critical systems like power structures, nuclear plants, air traffic control, computer networks, they're all connected and run by computers. Two years ago we had an amazing experience in America and around the world. We saw that a single failed electronics link with one satellite malfunction disable pagers, ATM's, credit card systems, and TV and radio networks all over the world. That was an accident. The "love bug" was not an accident.

So to protect America from cybercrime and cyberterrorism, we have developed a national plan for cybersecurity, with both public and private sector brains putting it together. We're asking for increased funding to implement this plan to protect our vital networks. That's something else I hope you will support.

We talk about computer viruses and often forget the world is also threatened by physical infection like malaria, TB, and AIDS. Some people questioned me when our administration announced a couple of weeks ago that we considered the AIDS crisis a national security threat. But let me just give you a couple of examples.

In Africa alone, there are 70 percent of the world's AIDS cases. The fastest growing rate of AIDS is in India, which happens to be a nuclear power. In Africa, some countries are actually hiring two employees for every job, on the assumption that one of them is

going to die from AIDS. In other African countries, 30 percent of the teachers and 40 percent of the soldiers have the virus. In addition, millions of people suffer from malaria, and about a third of the world has been exposed to TB, a disease that can reach our shores at the speed of jet travel.

With malaria, people now discuss in common parlance, airport malaria, something people can get at any international airport in any country in the world because we're all traveling around and bumping into people from other countries. These diseases can ruin economies and threaten the very survival of nations and societies. I think meeting this public health challenge is a moral imperative and a national security concern.

I issued an Executive order last week to help make AIDS drugs more affordable to people in poor countries. I propose that we give a generous tax credit to our private pharmaceutical companies to give them an incentive to develop vaccines for things like AIDS, malaria, and TB, because the people who need it most can't afford to pay for it. If we help them pay for it, we can save millions of lives and strengthen our security. If we don't, we will dramatically increase the chances of chaos, murder, the abuse of children, the kind of things we have seen in some of the terrible tribal wars in Africa in the last couple of years.

Finally, there's one more global challenge I want you to think about that I think is a security challenge, the challenge of climate change. Nine of the 10 warmest years since the 15th century were recorded in the 1990's—9 of the 10 warmest years since the 15th century. Unless we change course and reverse global greenhouse gas emissions, most scientists are convinced that storms and droughts will intensify as the globe continues to warm. Crop patterns will be disrupted. Food supplies will be affected. The seas will rise so high they will swallow islands and coastal areas, and if that happens, all the Luders training in the world won't save us. [Laughter]

I want you to laugh, but I want you to listen. This is a huge challenge that can become a national security challenge. If we value our coastlands and farmlands, we must work at home. If we value the stability of

our neighbors and friends and the rights of people around the world, particularly in island nations, to live their lives in peace according to their cultures and religious faiths, we must work with other nations. This is a global challenge.

And the good news is, we don't need to put more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere anymore to grow the economy. All we need is the vision and will and discipline to do the job.

Finally, we have to deal with the global challenge of narcotrafficking and drugs. We have to do a lot here at home, zero tolerance for drug use, treatment for those who suffer, punishment for those who profit. But we also have to fight these big drug cartels and the criminal empires they finance. Ninety percent of the cocaine consumed in America, two-thirds of the heroin seized on our streets comes from or through just one country, Colombia.

Now, Colombia has a courageous new President, Andres Pastrana, who has asked for our help to finance his comprehensive Plan Colombia to fight drugs, build the economy, and deepen democracy. I've asked Congress to give \$1.6 billion to pay our share of Plan Colombia over the next 2 years. The House just passed a bill. I hope the Senate will do so as soon as possible. It is a national security issue.

For Colombia, Latin America's oldest democracy, is not just fighting for its peoples' lives and its way of life; it's fighting to preserve stability in the entire Andean region, and it's fighting for the lives of our kids, too. So again, it's not in the Department of Defense budget in a direct way, or in the Department of Transportation budget in a direct way, but it directly affects our national security, and I hope you will support it.

In all these challenges, the Coast Guard will play a vital role. You always have. In the 18th century the predecessor to today's Coast Guard manned antislavery patrols and coordinated tariff collection for a young nation. In the 19th century you assumed responsibility for search and rescue, marine inspection, and quarantine laws. In the last century, the 20th century, you arrested rumrunners during Prohibition, enforced environmental

laws, interdicted drugs, and even delivered marines to the beaches at Normandy.

We're trying to make sure you can do your job in the 21st century. My 2001 budget requests another \$376 million for the Coast Guard, the largest one-year increase in 20 years, including a 34 percent increase to buy ships. I will also recommend to the next President that America continue to support the Coast Guard's Deep Water Project, so you have the ships and planes you need to meet challenges that face us. We can't meet threats to the future with a Coast Guard fleet from the past.

Let me say just this last point. We cannot accept the fact that the burden of protecting America's security falls solely on the shoulders of those who stand watch on our borders and coastlines, on the high seas or our allies' home ground, that it involves only immediate threats to our security.

Ever since the end of the cold war, some people have been saying, "We don't need to play such an active role in the world anymore or worry about distant conflicts or play our part in international institutions like the United Nations." I want to ask you what you think the alternative is: a survivalist foreign policy, build a fence around America and retreat behind it; a go-it-alone foreign policy, where we do it our way, and if people disagree with us, we just don't do it at all? I profoundly disagree with both.

Remember the story I told you about the millennium and the help we got from Jordan and the work we did with Canada. It wouldn't have mattered what we had done. If they hadn't helped us, we'd have had bombs going off here as we celebrated the millennium. We have got to be more involved in a cooperative way with other nations to advance our national security.

America has been called a shining city on a hill. That doesn't mean our oceans are moats. It doesn't mean our country is a fortress. If we wait to act until problems come home to America, problems are far more likely to come home to America. I hope when you leave here today as new officers, you will be convinced that more than any previous time in history, your Nation must be engaged in the world, paying our fair share, doing our fair share, working with others to secure

peace and prosperity where we can, leading where we must, and standing up for what we believe.

That's why I support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I hope the Congress will ratify it next year. That's why I've worked to relieve the debts of the poorest nations of the world and to help them build their economies and their educational systems; why we have worked to expand trade with Africa and the poor Caribbean nations, to deepen our economic ties to Latin American and Asia; why we work for peace in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, for democracy in Haiti, and an end to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo; for reconciliation between North and South Korea, India and Pakistan, Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. They may be along way from home but, more and more, as the years go by, you will see that in an age of globalism, our values and interests are at stake in these places, as well.

Almost 40 years ago, President Kennedy stood on the deck of the *Eagle*, and that day he said this: "There is not a single person who has sailed any of our lakes or oceans who has not at one time or another been the beneficiary of the faithful service of the Coast Guard."

Today, that great tradition falls to you in the greatest age of possibility in human history. You are the generation chosen by providence to lead the Coast Guard into the new century. Your class motto says, *Ducentes viam en millennium*—leading the way into the new millennium. Now you have the preparation to do it. You clearly have the courage and character to do it. I pray you will also have the vision and wisdom to take your motto and truly make it your own.

Good luck. Thank you for your service, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. at Cadet Memorial Field. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. James M. Loy, USCG, Commandant of the Coast Guard; Rear Adm. Douglas Teeson, USCG, Superintendent, and Capt. Thomas J. Haas, USCG (Ret.), Dean of Academics and Supervisory Professor, U.S. Coast Guard Academy; Capt. William P. Dillon, Chaplain Corps, USN, who delivered the invocation; Cadet First Class Christopher Burrus, who delivered the valedictorian ad-

dress; and Onel de Guzman, who allegedly unleashed the "love bug" computer virus.

Statement on the Environmental Protection Agency's Efforts To Reduce Emissions From Trucks and Buses

May 17, 2000

The measures proposed today by the Environmental Protection Agency to reduce harmful emissions from trucks and buses represent another major milestone in this administration's long-standing effort to ensure cleaner, healthier air for all Americans.

Air pollution has declined dramatically over the past quarter century, but stronger action is needed to protect public health and keep us on track to meeting our Nation's air quality goals. That is why last year I announced tough new tailpipe and fuel standards to dramatically reduce emissions from cars, SUV's, and other light-duty trucks. Today's proposal would establish stringent new standards for heavy-duty trucks and buses and the diesel fuel that powers them. These proposed standards would produce the cleanest trucks and buses ever, significantly reducing smog, soot, and other pollutants that contribute to asthma and other respiratory disease.

Americans today enjoy the cleanest environment in a generation and the longest economic expansion in our Nation's history. I am confident that today's proposal—which will be refined in the coming months with input from the public, industry, and the environmental community—will produce even greater benefits for both our economy and our environment.

Statement on Congressional Action on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

May 17, 2000

I am encouraged that the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee have both approved legislation today authorizing the extension of permanent normal trade relations to China. Today's approval of PNTR is a significant step toward

final passage by the Congress. The strong bipartisan votes in both committees send a clear, strong message that permanent normal trade relations for China is vital to America's prosperity at home, our leadership in the world, and to positive change in China.

The full Congress will now consider this legislation. Members will not decide whether China will join the WTO—it will. Congress will decide whether we put American workers, farmers, and businesses at a disadvantage by denying them the access to and benefits from China's markets that their competitors in Japan and Europe will have. A vote for PNTR will bring down China's barriers to American exports, opening the largest potential market in the world to our goods and services. A vote against PNTR will cost us exports and jobs and cede this massive new market to our competitors.

This is a decision of great importance and a moment of historic opportunity. In this, the last week before the final vote, I will redouble my efforts to convince Congress and the American people to seize that opportunity to strengthen our economy, our national security, and the forces of reform and positive change in China.

Statement on the Need for Congressional Action on Tobacco

May 17, 2000

New studies released by independent researchers today underscore the need for congressional action in the fight to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. New studies by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the American Legacy Foundation show that tobacco advertising in magazines read by large numbers of kids has increased over one-third since the 1998 settlement agreement between States and tobacco companies. In addition, not only have tobacco companies increased the number of magazine ads targeted to young people, they may actually be doing it more effectively. The studies show that these ads are actually being seen by more young people. Top brand advertising alone now reaches 70 percent of all teens.

I call on the attorneys general from the States who signed the agreement to take immediate and appropriate enforcement action to stop these practices. And again, I call on Congress to give the FDA meaningful authority to regulate the marketing, sale, and manufacturing of tobacco products. The youth-oriented advertising addressed in these studies would have been limited by the FDA rule. FDA's hands should not remain tied by congressional inaction.

In 1998 Senators Frist and McCain introduced a bill that would have given the FDA authority to regulate the marketing and sale of tobacco products. Unfortunately, a weak, watered-down bill was introduced yesterday that would allow the marketing practices revealed today to continue. Instead of protecting our children from tobacco, some in Congress are actually trying to block out efforts to hold the tobacco industry accountable for decades of deception. As a Senate appropriations committee recently passed a rider that would stop the Justice Department from proceeding with litigation to recover Federal tobacco-related health costs from tobacco manufacturers. I urge Congress to reject this blatant effort to put special interests ahead of the taxpayers.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

May 17, 2000

Monday, May 22, marks the second anniversary of the referenda in which the voters of Ireland and Northern Ireland overwhelmingly endorsed the Good Friday accord. Since then, Northern Ireland has made great strides toward becoming a peaceful society, following three decades of violence. Today, we are on the threshold of a major achievement—a lasting political arrangement that will allow the people of Northern Ireland and their representatives to decide their future for themselves by exclusively peaceful means, on the basis of consent. This is a chance to lock in the unprecedented progress that has been attained and propel the process forward. It is an opportunity that must not be lost. I urge the parties to lift their sights, seize the possibilities that are within their grasp,

and take the steps necessary to advance the cause of peace.

**Executive Order 13156—
Amendment to Executive Order
12871 Regarding the National
Partnership Council**

May 17, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to provide for a uniform policy for the Federal Government relating to labor-management partnerships, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order 12871, as amended by Executive Order 12983, is further amended as follows:

Section 1. Section 1(a)(10) of the order is amended by striking “two” and inserting “three.”

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 17, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
8:45 a.m., May 18, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on May 19.

**Memorandum on Strengthening Our
Commitment to Service Through
Voluntary Opportunities**

May 17, 2000

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive
Departments and Agencies*

Subject: Strengthening Our Commitment to
Service Through Voluntary Opportunities

Volunteer community service is a great American tradition and a profound expression of the civic values that bind us together as a Nation. Nowhere is the spirit of volunteerism more alive than among employees of the Federal Government, thousands of whom serve their country with dedication at work and as volunteers in their local communities. On April 22, 1998, I directed Federal departments and agencies to expand community service opportunities for Federal employees by making maximum use of existing

flexibility in work scheduling policies. On June 17, 1999, I encouraged all departments and agencies with operations in the District of Columbia to apply those policies so that their D.C.-based employees could take advantage of an important new community service opportunity: tutoring public school students in a program called *D.C. Reads This Summer*. Over a thousand Federal employees chose to take part, and based on the program's success last summer, I am today inviting Federal employees to sign up for the program again this summer.

From July 6 to July 27, 2000, an estimated 22,000 D.C. school children with low test scores will be in mandatory enrichment summer school programs run by the D.C. Public School system. Students whose scores do not markedly improve risk being held back a grade. This is part of the District's ambitious plan to end social promotion while also giving children the extra help they need to meet higher standards—the kind of positive reform I have called on all school districts to adopt. As the District's largest employer, the Federal Government has a unique opportunity to help children improve their scores and rejoin their classmates this fall.

That is why I am pleased that the Corporation for National and Community Service is assisting Federal departments and agencies in recruiting Federal employees to become volunteer reading tutors through the *D.C. Reads This Summer* program.

Employees who choose to sign up with *D.C. Reads This Summer* will receive training and be able to work one-on-one with students once or twice a week for 4 weeks at one of 25 school- and community-based tutoring sites around the city. I encourage departments and agencies that have not already done so to find a member of their staff willing to volunteer as a liaison to *D.C. Reads This Summer*. I ask departments and agencies to inform employees of this rewarding volunteer opportunity and assist where possible in transporting employees to and from the sites. I also ask that you continue to encourage and support employees who choose to volunteer through other community programs. In addition to *D.C. Reads*, there are many excellent programs being run through libraries and religious and community centers throughout

the D.C. area. Finally, I encourage you to maintain or strengthen any preexisting partnerships that your department or agency may already have with D.C. or other local school systems, including tutoring in year-round programs.

William J. Clinton

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect
to Sudan**

May 17, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Sudan that was declared in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 17, 2000.

**Remarks at a Democratic National
Committee Dinner in Greenwich,
Connecticut**

May 17, 2000

Thank you. Scott, we ought to take this act on the road. [*Laughter*] I may do another video with you in it. [*Laughter*]

I want to say, first of all, I loved that introduction. [*Laughter*] And it meant more to me than you know. I hope most people do think I'm their kind of guy—but especially young people like him.

And I want to thank the Richmans for opening their beautiful, beautiful home to us. And I thank all the cochairs of this event, Ronni, Braith, Peter, Bob, and the others who worked on it. Thank you very much.

I thank Mayor Rendell for taking on this little part-time job of heading the Democratic Committee. [*Laughter*] And my old law school classmate Dick Blumenthal, I

thank him for being here; and Mayor Malloy, Senator McDermott, and Barbara Kennelly, who now works in our administration at the Social Security Administration. You might want to talk to her about Social Security reform—[*laughter*—give her all your ideas. And I thank Ed Marcus and the other folks who have come who've been active in Connecticut Democratic politics for a long time.

I would like to just make a few brief points. I know the hour is late, and I got to visit with a lot of you coming through.

Number one, whenever I'm anywhere now, I try not to miss a chance to say thank you. The people of Connecticut have been very good to me and to Al Gore, Hillary and Tipper. They gave us their electoral votes—you did twice, by a good margin the first time and a bigger one the second time. And I'm very, very grateful for that.

The second thing I would like to say is, believe it or not, even though things are going well, it's my opinion that the 2000 election is at least as important as the elections of 1992 and 1996, because in 2000 people will make a very great decision, which is what to do about our good fortune and whether to ratify the policies that got us to this point and build on them in the future. It's a huge decision.

And if you listen to the debate, it's obvious that our friends in the other party, from the top down, hope that the American people don't think that's what they're supposed to do in this election. So they want to blur all these decisions, you know, and turn it into sort of a feel-good deal. And I mean, things are going along so well, who could mess it up, right? [*Laughter*] So just kind of, let's just, you know, a little bit of this, a little bit of that, a little bit of the other thing.

So I'm glad you're here, and I thank you for your money, and we'll try to spend it well. But you're not done, because you've got to be good citizens between now and November, because I'm telling you, this election is just as important as the last two were.

I spent so much of the last 7½ years trying to turn the ship of state around, trying to build our bridge to the new century, trying to make sure things were going in the right direction. Well, now they are. And when I leave office, we will have paid off about \$355

billion of the national debt. And it was projected, when I took office, that this year the deficit would be about \$400 billion a year.

If I told you in 1992, "Vote for me, and before I get out of here, I'll give you at least 3 years of surpluses and pay off over \$350 billion of the debt, and I'll double investment in education and training at the same time," you would have said, "He seems like such a nice man, but he's slightly"—[laughter]—"deranged, and we'd better send him home."

So I'm grateful for what's going right. But it's just the beginning. And I go back to what I said in the State of the Union Address. It is a stern test of a free people, not just how they behave when they're under the gun in depression and war but how they behave when all things seem possible, and things are going very well. And the easiest thing to do is to let down and be distracted and be diverted and take the easy way out. This is the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for our children.

But to do it, we have to make a lot of big decisions. I think we have to decide to keep paying down the debt; to make extraordinary efforts to bring the benefits of the new economy to people and places that have been left behind, through incentives to invest in those places; to give every child a world-class education and access to college, and to those who need it, preschool and after-school programs; to give working families access to affordable health care; to do more to help people balance work and family; to prove that you can grow the economy and improve the environment, not undermine it—and you can, by the way, in the new information age—to prove that we can be the safest big country in the world; to prove that we can build a country that brings us together instead of divides us at election time.

Now, I think this is important. This is big. I've worked real hard so you guys could do this when I was gone.

I'm not running for anything. Most days I'm okay about that. [Laughter] I had a great time at Hillary's nomination last night. She was great, and thank you, those of you that are helping her, I'm very grateful.

But you've got to think about this. That's what this election is about. Whether people think that's what it's about, enough is another

thing altogether. But I'm telling you that's what this election is about. And 50 years from now, when people look back and write about this time, this is how this election year will be judged: What did we do with our prosperity? What did we do with a declining crime rate, welfare rolls cut in half, other social problems getting better? What did we do with this enormous period of good fortune, with the absence of domestic crisis or foreign threat to our security? What in the wide world did we do with it, with all these big challenges and opportunities sitting there right before our eyes?

It's not like we have to look around the corner—as the Irish say some people can do, can see around corners. You don't have to see around corners. You know what the big challenges and opportunities facing this country are. That's the whole deal. That's the first thing I want to say.

The second thing I want to tell you is, I think that Vice President Gore is uniquely qualified to lead this country at this moment, because he understands the future and knows how to get us there. And I've listened very carefully to all the things that have been said, pro and con, in the last several weeks. And one of the most amazing things I have ever heard is people saying, "Well, you know, this guy won't take a tough position." He broke the tie in the budget. It passed by one vote. The Republicans, every one of them, was against it, 100 percent of them. They said, "We were going to bankrupt the country, and we were going to wreck the economy." Now they say, "Oh, so what if we were wrong? So what if we quadrupled the debt? Please put us in control again." We won by a vote. He broke the tie on gun control. We won by one vote. In the Senate, we voted to close the gun show loophole. We voted to have a ban on large capacity ammunition clips being imported into this country. We voted to require child trigger locks in the Senate by one vote. He supported me when I gave financial aid to Mexico. You know what the poll was on that? Eighty-one to 15, don't do it. He supported me when we went into Bosnia. He supported me when we went into Kosovo. He supported me when we went into Haiti. He supported me when no administration had ever consistently taken on

either the gun lobby or the tobacco lobby before.

So that's the first thing you need to know. Every tough decision I had to make that was unpopular in the short run but was right for the long run, he was there early in the do-it camp.

The second thing I want to say is, I'm a little bit of an amateur historian of this country. I know a little bit about other Presidencies, and the institution of the Vice President. And you should know this. I work at night in a private office on President Grant's cabinet table. Now, when Grant was President, when Lincoln was President, there were only seven Cabinet Departments. And they actually had a form of Cabinet government: the Cabinet met two or three times a week. And there are eight drawers around this table. It tickles me; they could all keep their important papers on one little old drawer. Everybody had a key to a little drawer—[laughter]—and you know.

There wasn't even a place for the Vice President, not even a place. Even after Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, and before that William Henry Harrison died of a bad cold, because he spoke for 3 hours and a half at his inaugural without a coat, people didn't even think about it.

We were just lucky that Theodore Roosevelt turned out to be a great President, after William McKinley was assassinated. And though I love him very much, President Roosevelt, we were just lucky that Harry Truman turned out to be a very great President indeed, because he did not even know about the existence of the atomic bomb when he became the President of the United States in the springtime of 1945.

Now, after that happened, people began to take this job a little more seriously. Before that, people—guys that were running for President just picked somebody for Vice President they thought would balance the ticket, geographically or politically or agewise or some otherwise.

And if you think about it, it was a crazy waste of potential, right? How would you like to be able to hire somebody, give them a good job, a nice staff, and tell them what to do, and if they had a lot of talent, give them a lot of power, and they'd make you

look good? I think these other guys didn't know what they were missing. But I'm just telling you, it didn't happen.

Now, President Eisenhower gave Richard Nixon a little more responsibility. Then President Kennedy gave Lyndon Johnson still more responsibility. He had been the Senate majority leader. He was a man of great experience and knowledge. And Hubert Humphrey had more or less the same role that Lyndon Johnson did.

Then, to be fair, the first big breakthrough came with Jimmy Carter, who made Walter Mondale a genuine partner in the Vice Presidency. They had lunch every week. Walter Mondale could come to any meeting. Vice President Mondale had been in the Senate and worked in Washington. Governor Carter, then, before he was President, had never done that. And they had a fabulous partnership. And to give credit where credit is due, President Reagan followed that model when George Bush, President Bush, became Vice President. And he had about as much of a role in the Reagan/Bush years—often they were doing things I didn't agree with—but the point is, it was a responsible decision. Ronald Reagan made a responsible decision to let George Bush be a part of that.

So in the whole history of the country, you've got everybody else—Johnson and Nixon, Mondale and Bush, okay? And then here's Gore. This is a matter of historic fact. There has never been a Vice President who has had so much positive impact on the American people as Vice President.

For one thing, as he points out, whenever he votes in the Senate, we win. [Laughter] But far beyond that, let me just tell you a few things. He ran our reinventing Government program. We have the smallest Federal Government in 40 years, and I'll give you 100 bucks if you can name five programs that were eliminated. We eliminated hundreds of them. You haven't missed them, have you? Why? Because we doubled our investment in education, we continued to increase our investment in science and technology and medical research.

He ran our empowerment zone program, that has brought thousands upon thousands of jobs to people and places that were left behind, by creating special tax-incentive

zones with special public investments to create more economic opportunity.

He was our principal adviser in telecommunications and technology. And we had a lot to do with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Since then, there have been hundreds of thousands of jobs created in the high-tech industry. I went to a dinner the other night in New York City with 40 executives of companies that did not exist in 1996, before the telecom bill was signed.

And he fought for the E-rate, which is now giving \$2.2 billion in discounts to school districts, the poorest school districts in this country, to make sure that all of our schools can be hooked up to the Internet. In '94, when we started, we had 16 percent of the classrooms and 3 percent—I mean, 16 percent of the schools and 3 percent of the classrooms with an Internet connection. Today, we have 95 percent of the schools and 75 percent of the classrooms because of the E-rate that Al Gore fought for.

He has managed a lot of our environmental policies, and being criticized by the Republicans for doing that. If we had not demonstrated that you can have cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food, and set aside more land than anybody but the Roosevelts and still grow the economy, I don't know what it would take to convince people that you can have a strong economy and a good environment. And he deserves a lot of credit for that.

He managed big chunks of our relationship with Russia, our relationship with Egypt, our relationship with South Africa, a lot of the initiatives we took in arms control.

There has never, ever, ever, in the history of the United States, been a person who, as Vice President, had remotely the range of responsibility or positive impact that he has had. There has, therefore, never been a person who was Vice President who, because of that service, was remotely as well-qualified to be President as he is. Now, you need to know that.

And you also need to know that, in my opinion, he really does understand the future. And he knows how to lead us there. Ninety-five percent of the scientists say the climate's warming, and the big oil companies accept it, just about. And a lot of the big

companies that emit a lot of greenhouse gases are saying, "We've got to do something about climate change, otherwise it's going to wreck the whole environment of the world and flood island countries and destroy economies." In 1992 Al Gore was showing me his little chart—[laughter]—saying the same thing that everybody else now takes as the conventional wisdom.

If you want to make the most of prosperity in a time of rapid change, you'd better hire somebody who understands the future and knows how to get us there.

Now, I want to make one last point. There will be consequences to these decisions. I think you would all admit there were a few consequences to the decision the American people had to give the Congress, to the Republicans in 1994. There will be consequences.

The public will either choose to continue paying down the debt and to stay with the economic policy that has given us 21 million new jobs and the longest economic expansion in history or to revert to a policy that risks running deficits and drastically underinvesting in education, science and technology, and other things. That's going to happen. Whether people are aware of it, when the decision is made or not is up to you, but it will happen.

There will be a decision, which will either lead to continued improvements in the environment or people who believe that the Federal Government's got no business doing half of what we've done. And they'll try to undo some of what we've done. A couple of you told me how great you thought that 40 million roadless acres was, that we set aside in the national forests. The Audubon Society says it's one of the most significant things done in the 20th century. It will be history if the other side wins the White House and the Congress, because they've characterized it as a vast land grab. I don't know how you can grab what already belongs to you—these are Federal lands—but they have.

There will be vast consequences in whether we continue to make America the safest big country in the world. You saw where the gentleman from the NRA said the other day that if we lost the White House and they won, the NRA would have an office in the

White House. Now, since he's said that, they probably won't do it. That would probably be too embarrassing. But they will have a veto over policy.

You will—you know, I've got to say something about this gun control business. Progressives lose on labels and win on facts. So don't you let anybody talk to you about gun control and all that. You know, they act like—you know, you practically hear vampire music in the background when the other guys talk about this. They talk about the second amendment and its right to keep and bear arms. And I just want to—next time somebody talks to you about that, say, "Listen. The Supreme Court has also given us the right to travel. But when we have seatbelt laws, child safety laws, speed limit laws, and you have to get a driver's license to drive your car, nobody talks about car control." As if it's some—now, if I come get your car and put it in my garage, that's car control. [Laughter] Otherwise, it's highway safety.

This is a huge deal. We can make this country the safest big country in the world and not keep a hunter out of the deer woods or keep anybody from sports shooting. But we have to do sensible, preventive things to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. If it's important to you, you better manifest that in your election. You better make sure that everybody you know understands that, because there are huge consequences. There are huge consequences.

If you believe that the Supreme Court ought to protect individual liberties, including a woman's right to choose, you need to know that that's at stake in this election. It will stay if the Democrats win. It will go if the Republicans do. That's what I believe with all my heart. Within 24 months, it's goodbye; it's gone. And I'm old enough to remember what it was like before.

So for all the happy talk, you need to understand that number one, we owe it to the American people to say, "Set your sights high. Aim for the future. Build the future of our dreams for our children." Number two, we've got a candidate who's the best qualified person I can imagine and by far the best Vice President in the history of the country. And number three, there are huge differences in economic policy, crime policy,

social policy, environmental policy that will shape America's future. And I haven't even mentioned national security.

We're for a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, like most everybody else in the world. They're not for it. They want to get rid of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. They think all this arms control is an idle—you know, why worry about that? We've got more bombs than anybody else, and the Russians can't afford to build any more right now, so just go on. So, I'm just telling you folks, this is a big deal.

The voters have not yet begun to focus on this. They will begin to think more and more about it. They will draw their own conclusions. But my experience over many years, now, has been that the person who wins the election may be determined by what the people think the election is about. What is the subject of the election? If the people of this country believe it's whether we should be building the future of our dreams for these kids and the millions like them and the millions that are still living in poverty, without regard to race, religion, sexual orientation, or anything else—if that's what they think, we win.

You know, if they think this is a stroll in the park, this economy's on automatic, nobody could mess it up if they tried, and people say all kinds of things in an election to make promises to these radical interest groups, but maybe they won't happen, and so let's just kind of feel our way through this—who knows what's going to happen?

Clarity, facts, specifics, issues, evidence—those things are our friends. You've got to start asking everybody you know, what do you think this election is about?

So maybe this is too severe a thing for me to say to you after a nice dinner and a funny introduction, and I won twice in Connecticut. And I don't want you to think I'm an ingrate. But I went to all this trouble, and I worked, and I loved every day of it, and I'm not done. I'm going to get a lot of stuff done before I have to leave.

But I want you to understand, this is a millennial election in more than calendar years. This is a profoundly important decision about where we're going as a people. And you can't

let anybody think that it's just some ordinary event or that there are no consequences.

I'll close with this. When we celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history last February, I asked my advisers, I said, "Well, when was the last longest economic expansion in history?" You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969.

Scott's 17 years old. When I graduated from high school, I was 17 years old, in the springtime of 1964, in the full bloom of the last longest economic expansion in history. You know what I thought? I thought the sucker would go on forever. [*Laughter*]

Ah, we knew we had civil rights challenges. I thought they'd be settled in the courts and in Congress, not in the streets. I knew we had a few people in Vietnam. I never dreamed that we would have trouble prevailing and that the agony of it would someday tear our country apart and tear my generation apart. We just thought everything was fine.

Four years later, when I was a senior in college and I was fixing to graduate from college—passes like this—it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after my President, Lyndon Johnson, could not even run for reelection because this country was torn half in two over Vietnam. And just a couple of months after that, the last longest economic expansion in American history was itself history.

Now, those of us who are old enough to have memories have responsibilities. And I'm here to tell you I've been waiting for 35 years for another chance to do right by our future. And now we have no domestic civil rights struggle that puts millions in the street. Instead we have a million moms that just want our kids to be safe. We have no Vietnam war to divide us and distract us. And if we make the wrong decisions, we have only ourselves to blame. I'm telling you, this can be the best time in human history.

But this election decision for the Presidency and for Congress will determine what the shape of this country is for decades to come. That's why, if somebody tomorrow asks you why you came here, tell them that's why you came here. And tell them some of the things I've told you tonight. And what-

ever happens between now and November, don't you get tired. I've been waiting 35 years for this, and I'm not going to see us blow it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Rich and Ellen Richman and their son Scott, who introduced the President; Ronni Ginott, State chair, Women's Leadership Forum; dinner cochairs Braith and Peter Kelly and Bob Rose; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Mayor Dannel P. Malloy of Stamford, CT; State Senator Brian McDermott; and Connecticut State Democratic Party Chair Edward L. Marcus.

Remarks on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

May 18, 2000

The President. Good morning. It's always good to have Chairman Greenspan back at the White House, and I'm especially pleased that he has come today to join me in voicing his support for permanent normal trade relations with China. We all know that when Chairman Greenspan talks, the world listens. I just hope that Congress is listening today.

Many Members remain undecided, and we are doing everything we possibly can to round up each and every potential vote. I'm encouraged by the vote in the committees in both Houses, including both Republican and Democratic members, to overwhelmingly approve extending permanent normal trade relations with China. This legislation now goes before the full Congress.

All the former Presidents support it, along with former Secretaries of State, Defense, Trade, Transportation, National Security Advisers, Chairs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, religious leaders, many of the courageous people in China fighting for human rights and the rule of law.

Momentum is building, but we've still got a challenging fight. I thank Chairman Greenspan for coming here today, and I'd like for him to say whatever is on his mind about this issue.

Mr. Chairman.

[At this point, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to say that, first, I believe that Chairman Greenspan has established a pretty good record for knowing what is in America's economic interest. He has once again reiterated, clearly and unambiguously, that this agreement exchanges membership rights for China in the WTO for economic opportunities for America in China, for American businesses and American workers, without the tariffs and technology transfer requirements and production in China requirements and other requirements which have limited our ability to benefit from their market for too long. So economically, the case is clear and compelling.

But I would also like to emphasize here the national security aspects of this, and the human and political rights aspects. You've heard Chairman Greenspan address the human and political rights aspects, and make the point that increasing access to a market economy increases personal freedom in other ways. I will just cite one example, which is that China has gone from 2 million to 9 million to 20 million Internet users over the last 3 years. And it was exploding again this year. We do not know where it will be next year, but this is a profoundly significant thing.

That's why Martin Lee came all the way from Hong Kong. That's why people who have been, themselves, oppressed in China have pleaded with us to support this, because they know getting into a rules-based system and promoting economic competition will both enhance the march of liberty and law and human rights.

The other point I would like to make is, there is a serious national security issue here. We do not know what China will choose to do in the future, and China will make that decision for itself. But we know that one decision will dramatically increase the chances of a constructive relationship with China in a stable Asia, and the other will dramatically increase the chances of a less happy outcome. That's why Japan and North Korea, Thailand and the Philippines, our democratic allies in northeast Asia, are for this.

If you want to reduce tensions along the Taiwan Strait, if you want a more stable Asia,

if you want to maximize the chances of avoiding proliferation of dangerous weapons and a new arms race, a yes is the right vote.

Last point. As has been well-documented by those of you in our press, it is indeed ironic that the only people in China who want this vote to fail are the more reactionary elements of the military, economic, and political structure, who do not want to give up control and may need America as a continuing adversary to maintain that control and that capacity to repress liberty and human rights.

I believe the issue is profound and clear. And I am grateful for what Chairman Greenspan has said today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chairman Greenspan.

Remarks on Signing the Trade and Development Act of 2000

May 18, 2000

The President. I would like to, first of all, welcome all of you here to the South Lawn on this beautiful day for this important occasion. I thank the members of the Cabinet and the administration who are here. I thank the very large number of Members of Congress who are here from both parties, the mayors and other public officials who supported this legislation. I want to thank our Special Envoy for the Americas, Buddy MacKay, my point person on the Caribbean Basin Initiative, and our former and first Special Envoy to the Americas, Mack McLarty.

I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to Senator Roth and Senator Moynihan, to Representative Rangel and Representative Archer, to Senator Lott and to Speaker Hastert, who supported this legislation, and to all the Members who worked so hard to get this bill passed, including Representatives Crane, Jefferson, McDermott, Payne, Royce, and so many others who are here, too numerous to mention. I want to thank the members of the diplomatic corps who are here, who also supported this initiative.

The votes in the House and the Senate for the Trade and Development Act of 2000, what is commonly known as Africa-CBI, were bipartisan and overwhelming, because they reflect the judgment that the results of this legislation will be good for the United States, good for Africa, good for Central America, and the Caribbean.

This day has been a long time coming, but it is here. It is clear that by breaking down barriers to trade, building new opportunities, and raising prosperity, we can lift lives in every country and on every continent. Nowhere is that more apparent than here in the United States, where our exports and our open markets have given us the longest expansion in our history with low inflation.

This bill reaffirms that position. And I hope it will be reaffirmed next week when Congress votes on permanent normal trade relations with China. Congress will have another opportunity in considering the "Trade Preference Act for the Balkans," another poor region of the world that is important to our future.

Today I want to focus, though, on the areas that are affected by this legislation, on the Caribbean Basin and Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to more than 700 million people, one of our biggest potential trade partners. I say potential because American exports now account for only 6 percent of the African market. This bill will surely change that as it expands Africa's access to our markets and improves the ability of African nations to ease poverty, increase growth, and heal the problems of their people. It promotes the kinds of economic reform that will make sub-Saharan nations, on the long run, better allies, better trade partners, and stronger nations.

Closer to home, in the Caribbean Basin, we already have strong trade relations. Last year our exports to the region exceeded \$19 billion, making it the sixth largest market for our goods, larger than France or Brazil. That is remarkable but not as remarkable as the transformation of Central America and the Caribbean as a whole.

Despite the aftermath of war, the devastation of natural disasters, the region has made great strides toward recovery, democracy,

peace, and prosperity. On all my visits to the region, I have marveled at these changes.

Trade is one of the most powerful engines driving development in the region, and the Caribbean Basin Initiative has played a part. It's a key building block to a free trade area of the Americas, which I hope we will have in the next few years.

What we see in the Caribbean Basin and in Africa is that trade can broaden the benefits of the global economy and lift the lives of people everywhere. But it is not enough, and our agenda for the developing world must be multifaceted, recognizing that trade must work for all people and that spirited competition should lift all nations. I am pleased, for example, that this bill contains important child labor protections authored by Senator Harkin.

I'd also like to say that there's another big issue I hope we'll take up, as the Congress had been willing to do last year and again in a bipartisan fashion. Too many nations, developing nations, are still forced to choose between paying interest on their debts and meeting basic human needs for clean water, shelter, health, and education. Last year the wealthiest nations pledged faster and deeper debt relief to developing nations that make needed reforms, countries like Honduras, Nicaragua, many in sub-Saharan Africa. In September I pledged to go even further and make it possible to forgive all the debt of the poorest countries—that the poorest countries owe to the United States. And I am pleased that since then, every other wealthy nation has made the same commitment.

Now, we're here today because so many Members of Congress and those who talk to them dedicated themselves to trade, to development, to the future of the Caribbean Basin and Africa. Today I ask that we apply that same energy to our debt relief efforts.

I would also just like to take a few moments to remind you of what we all know, which is that there are enormous health challenges in the developing nations, which threaten their prosperity, their future, and could threaten their democracy. We know the massive human and economic costs the AIDS epidemic exacts in Africa, where every

day 5,500 people die. Last week I took executive action, building on the work of Senator Feinstein, to make AIDS-related drugs more affordable there. I've asked the Congress to enact tax incentives to speed the development and delivery of vaccines for AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis and to contribute to a global fund for the purchase of such vaccines so that they will go where they're most needed. And I hope again we will have a strong bipartisan level of support for this.

Finally, let me say that the legislation I sign today is about more than development and trade. It's about transforming our relationship with two regions full of good people trying to build good futures who are very important to our own future.

During the cold war, to many Americans, Central America was a battleground and Africa was a backwater. All that has changed. We have worked hard the last few years to build genuine partnership with both regions, based on not what we can do for them, not what we can do about them but on what we can do with them to build democracy together.

Let me finally say just a couple of words about Africa, because the good news this week comes against the backdrop of some tragic developments on the continent. Two of Africa's poorest but most promising nations, Ethiopia and Eritrea, resumed their senseless war. For over 2 years we've worked with the OAU to resolve that dispute. We won't abandon the effort. But Ethiopia and Eritrea must first see that backing away from self-destruction is not the same thing as backing down. Giving your people a future is not cowardice; it's common sense and courage.

We are also working with our African partners to support the people of Sierra Leone and the U.N. forces there, and we will do what is necessary to provide military transport and other support so the U.N. will get the reinforcement it needs.

We need to see the problems of Africa plainly and do our best to meet them. But that must not obscure the promise of Africa, which is also profoundly clear. It is the home to three of the world's fastest growing economies—three of the four fastest growing economies in the world are African economies—the progress of democracy, from Nigeria to South Africa; the proof offered by

countries like Uganda that AIDS and other diseases can be arrested, and the rates can be reduced where the governments care to try and work with people to do the hard things. Even in Sierra Leone, we see signs of hope, and we have been working with other nations in Africa to increase the capacity to meet the challenge there.

We must not avoid our neighbors in Central America and the Caribbean or our friends half a world away in Africa. We must build a better future together with both. That's what this is all about. That's the ultimate message of this trade bill.

I could not be prouder that over 70 percent of both Houses votes for this legislation, that majorities in both parties supported this legislation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and Senator Lott for the role you played. I want to thank the members of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus and the others whom I have just mentioned and everyone else who is here. This is a happy day for America. And 5 years from now, 10 years from now, 15 years from now, as we grow closer and closer and closer to our neighbors in the Caribbean and Central America and to our friends in Africa, we will look back on this day and say this was a big part of how it all began.

Thank you very much.

And now I'd like to call up here a gentleman who worked very, very hard for this day, the minority leader of the Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee, Mr. Charles Rangel from New York.

[At this point, Representatives Rangel and Bill Archer, Senators William V. Roth, Jr., and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky made brief remarks.]

The President. I would like to invite all the Members of Congress who are here to please come up and join us on the stage for the signing, along with Ambassador MacKay, wherever he is. Come on up here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:08 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. H.R. 434, approved May 18, was assigned Public Law No. 106-200.

**Statement on the Arrests in the 1963
Bombing of Birmingham's 16th
Street Baptist Church**

May 18, 2000

The terrorist bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in 1963 ended the lives of four young girls and broke the hearts of millions of Americans. To this day, the deaths of Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley stand out as a powerful symbol of the terrible toll of racial hatred. I applaud the continuing efforts of those who have worked so hard to see to it that justice is done in this case. We must not rest until all those responsible for this horrific crime are held accountable for what they have done.

**Statement on the Ron Brown Award
for Corporate Leadership**

May 18, 2000

When I called on the business community in 1996 to work with the administration to develop a new Presidential award for corporate citizenship, the response was immediate and enthusiastic. The Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership is now a preeminent corporate citizenship award in America. And so today I am pleased to welcome to the White House the most recent winners of this honor.

The five companies we recognize today earned this award because they've developed some of the Nation's most innovative, successful programs in employee and community relations. General Mills is strengthening communities through an inner-city joint venture. GTE's literacy programs reach 40 millions adult Americans who struggle with basic reading. Hewlett-Packard's commitment to diversity in education reaches talented individuals from kindergarten to graduate school. IBM's partnerships with our public schools bring new ideas and new technologies to American youngsters. US WEST's commitment to diversity benefits employees and communities across a broad swath of America.

As I had hoped, the Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership is making a significant difference in America by showing that businesses can do well by doing good—something that Ron Brown, for whom this award is named, often reminded us. Like the Malcolm Baldrige award, it exemplifies the best of American business. Managed by the independent research organization, the Conference Board, this award has broad support in the business community. I know it will continue to strengthen employees, families, and communities for many years to come by celebrating and spreading the highest achievements in corporate citizenship.

**Statement on the Treasury
Department's Debt Buybacks**

May 18, 2000

The American economy and our strategy of fiscal discipline continue to break records. Today the Department of the Treasury is announcing that in April the United States had the largest monthly budget surplus ever. In the first 7 months of this year, the surplus stands at a record \$124 billion, matching the surplus for all of last year. This dramatic news is yet more evidence that our strategy of fiscal discipline, investing in people, and opening markets abroad is working.

These unprecedented surpluses call for new tools to manage our finances in the best interest of the American economy. Today the Department of the Treasury is once again buying back some of our Nation's debt. In total, we are on track to pay off a record \$355 billion of debt over 3 years.

It is essential that we stay on the fiscal course that has brought us the longest economic expansion in history. Risky tax cuts that threaten this prosperity are the wrong approach. We should invest in our future by strengthening Social Security and Medicare, making investments in key priorities like education, and paying off the entire debt by 2013, making America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President.

**Notice—Continuation of Emergency
With Respect to Burma**

May 18, 2000

On May 20, 1997, I issued Executive Order 13047, effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on May 21, 1997, certifying to the Congress under section 570(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104–208), that the Government of Burma has committed large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma after September 30, 1996, thereby invoking the prohibition on new investment in Burma by United States persons, contained in that section. I also declared a national emergency to deal with the threat posed to the national security and foreign policy of the United States by the actions and policies of the Government of Burma, invoking the authority, *inter alia*, of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706).

The National Emergency declared on May 20, 1997, must continue beyond May 20, 2000, because the Government of Burma continues its policies of committing large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Burma. This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 18, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 12:47 p.m., May 18, 2000]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on May 19.

**Message to the Congress on
Continuation of the National
Emergency With Respect to Burma**

May 18, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to Burma is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 2000.

As long as the Government of Burma continues its policies of committing large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma, this situation continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force these emergency authorities beyond May 20, 2000.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 18, 2000.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
Burma**

May 18, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-

month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 18, 2000.

**Message to the Senate Transmitting
the South Africa-United States
Extradition Treaty With
Documentation**

May 18, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of South Africa, signed at Washington on September 16, 1999.

In addition, I transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty. As the report explains, the Treaty will not require implementing legislation.

The provisions in this Treaty follow generally the form and content of extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern extradition treaties being negotiated by the United States to counter criminal activities more effectively. Upon entry into force, the Treaty will replace the outdated Treaty Relating to the Reciprocal Extradition of Criminals signed at Washington, December 18, 1947, and in force between the two countries since April 30, 1951. Together with the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of South Africa on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, also signed September 16, 1999, this Treaty will, upon entry into force, enhance cooperation between the law enforcement communities of the two countries. It will thereby make a significant contribution to international law enforcement efforts against serious offenses,

including terrorism, organized crime, and drug-trafficking offenses.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 18, 2000.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting a Report on Cyprus**

May 18, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period February 1–March 31, 2000. The previous submission covered events during December 1999 and January 2000.

As noted in my last submission, the United Nations has held two sessions of proximity talks, December 3–14, 1999, in New York and January 31–February 8 in Geneva. The next session of talks was scheduled to begin on May 23 in New York. This session will likely be postponed several weeks to allow President Clerides time to recover from surgery on May 5.

The United States, under the guidance of my Special Presidential Emissary Alfred H. Moses and Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas G. Weston, has been actively engaged in supporting the United Nations effort to bring about a comprehensive Cyprus settlement. Ambassador Moses and his team were present during the Geneva talks and afterwards traveled to Cyprus in March to prepare for the next sessions of talks.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Proclamation 7309—National Safe Boating Week, 2000

May 18, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Living in a country bordered by oceans and blessed with abundant lakes and rivers, Americans have made recreational boating one of our Nation's most popular pastimes. Each year, more than 74 million Americans take to the water with family and friends to relax and enjoy the beauty of the natural world.

But each year, for too many Americans, boating ends in tragedy. Most boating-related injuries and deaths are the result of human error and poor judgment, caused, for example, by excessive speed, failure to follow safe navigation rules, and drinking or taking drugs while operating watercraft. These injuries could easily be prevented by using common sense and making safety the first priority.

Boating accidents can occur at any time—whether the water is smooth or turbulent and whether the boater is experienced or a novice. One of the best ways to make a recreational boating experience safe and enjoyable is to ensure that everyone on board always wears a life jacket. To reinforce this life-saving message, the National Safe Boating Campaign has once again selected the theme “Boat Smart from the Start! Wear Your Life Jacket!” for this year's observance. Recreational boating organizations, including the National Safe Boating Council and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments, are continuing to promote safety through education by emphasizing the importance of wearing life jackets and practicing boating and water safety.

In recognition of the importance of safe boating practices, the Congress, by joint resolution approved June 4, 1958 (36 U.S.C. 131), as amended, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim annually the 7-day period ending on the last Friday

before Memorial Day as “National Safe Boating Week.”

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 20 through May 26, 2000, as National Safe Boating Week. I encourage the governors of the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to join in observing this occasion and to urge all Americans to use safe boating practices throughout the year.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 22, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 23.

Remarks on the 50th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day in Suitland, Maryland

May 19, 2000

Thank you very much. Secretary Cohen, thank you for your kind words and your truly exemplary leadership of the Department of Defense. Secretary Slater, thank you for your presence here and the support you have given the Coast Guard. General Shelton, thank you for your lifetime of service and for your leadership of the Joint Chiefs. And Senator Glenn, I thank you for your service, your personal friendship to me, and your astonishing lifetime example. We're all looking forward to going into space in our late seventies, thanks to you. I thank the members of the Joint Chiefs and the Service Secretaries. General Jones, General Shalikashvili, thank you for being here. Ladies and gentlemen of our Armed Forces, family members, and friends.

I want to begin, if I might, by paying tribute to the men and women of our military who work in the White House, my Andrews-based Air Force One crews, my helicopter crews, my military aides, and those from

every branch of the services who actually work at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Without you, we couldn't do America's business, stand up for America's interests, or even keep the White House open as America's house. Thank you for 7½ wonderful years.

As has already been said, 50 years ago tomorrow America marked the first Armed Forces Day. It was then an uncertain time for our country, Americans coming to realize that our new global leadership carried with it global responsibilities, chief among them, the defense of freedom across the world. American troops then still occupied Germany and soon would be pouring into Korea. All around us there were new and terrifying weapons, determined adversaries, and an unfamiliar landscape. Against that backdrop, President Truman moved to put in place the foundations of America's modern military, a force united under the Department of Defense.

The first Armed Forces Day celebrated service unity, honored those in uniform, and reassured Americans that our military was ready for whatever challenges lay ahead. Fifty years later we can look back proudly on a half-century in which America's best have more than met those challenges. We are as secure at home and safe from external threat today as we have been at any time in our long history. For that, we owe every American in uniform and everyone who has served before an eternal debt.

Next week, as we celebrate Memorial Day, we will remember the thousands of men and women who have given their lives so that we might live in peace. I hope all Americans will teach our children how their forebears fought and died for the freedoms we hold dear. I have asked every office in the Federal Government to observe a moment of remembrance for our military dead, to put the "memorial" back in Memorial Day.

Over my service as President, I have seen our men and women in uniform meet every conceivable kind of challenge, from flying flawless missions over Kosovo to working to contain Saddam Hussein to keeping our word on the Korean Peninsula to slogging through the mud to rebuild lives and communities in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch in Central America to keeping the

peace in Bosnia, and everywhere you go, always representing the best of America.

Some of you have mentioned to me, from time to time as I meet our service personnel, that you see in the pictures at the Oval Office the stands of military coins I have there given to me by units, officers, and enlisted personnel all over the world. I have about 400 now. And my historians at the White House say I have visited more military units than any President before. All I can tell you is, it's been one of the great honors of my life. I never get tired of it. And if you have a coin I don't have, I'd be glad to have it today. *[Laughter]*

I never cease to be amazed at all the different things we ask our Armed Forces to do. We ask them to serve in the White House or in Kosovo's Camp Bondsteel, on the deck of a carrier or on the crew of a space shuttle launch. We ask you to defend our interests in a 21st century world of high-tech weapons, fast-moving, small-scale warfare, peace-keeping—sometimes when there's no peace to keep—and terrorism. But the 21st century challenge is the same essentially as President Truman defined 50 years ago, readiness for any eventuality. Today I want to talk just a little bit about what we are doing and must continue to do in the areas of personnel readiness, combat readiness, and civilian readiness to help you meet that challenge.

As has already been said by previous speakers, the people in our Armed Forces are our most important asset. So our first task is doing the best job we can of recruiting and retaining good people, to train them to do their jobs right, to train them so they can do their jobs safely, and then to provide the state-of-the-art equipment that will keep them ahead of every adversary and every eventuality.

Keeping faith with you is a sacred obligation. We've tried to do it. Over the last 2 years, military pay has been raised by more than 8 percent, with another significant raise slated for this year. This year's raise was the largest in about 20 years. In July we're increasing parts of the military pay scale as much as 5 percent more to reward service members who gain experience and stay with us to put it to use.

And we must never forget that, although we recruit individuals, we must retain families. Thanks to the leadership in the Department of Defense, military child care and schools are now the envy of many civilians. We are working to provide better military housing and taking steps to improve access to medical care for all military personnel, families, and retirees.

Readiness also means making sure our forces are trained to fight and equipped to win. The world we live in demands a high tempo of operations. That puts strains on individuals and families and creates important challenges for readiness.

I realize that I am the first President to serve his entire service in the post-cold-war era and that, as a consequence, I have imposed more high-tempo operations on the military, more different kinds of things in more different circumstances than any previous President in peacetime. Often, when I see our young men and women in uniform, I don't know whether to thank them or apologize, because I know what burdens I have imposed on many of you and your families. All I can tell you is America is a safer, stronger place, and the world is a more peaceful, more democratic place because of what you have done. And we have to continue to do everything we can to ease your burdens and make it more likely that you will be successful.

We have tried to watch combat readiness closely. We have tried to respond rapidly where there are strains. For several years now, we've increased the amount of money available for readiness spending, including \$5.4 billion for the year ahead. We've worked with Congress to protect funds for training and equipment and proposed an increase of \$124 billion to support military personnel, strengthen readiness, and speed modernization with improved facilities through the next 5 years. That includes the latest advances in digital communications and navigation technology for soldiers in the field, advanced combat aircraft, like Super Hornets, Raptors, and the Joint Strike fighter, new and modernized destroyers, and a new aircraft carrier and, less exciting but perhaps even more important, more money for spare parts.

I've talked about our budget and priorities for readiness, but we also must meet our responsibility for civilian readiness, creating an understanding among our elected officials and among our people at large that power and prestige don't just happen, that America cannot be a leader for peace and freedom and prosperity without paying the price. Civilian readiness means commitment to keeping our military the best trained, the best equipped, the best led fighting force. It means support for diplomacy that can help us avoid using force in the first place. It means that when we do make the difficult decision to commit our troops, we stay the course.

Secretary Cohen talked about our involvement in Kosovo. Last spring I had the privilege of meeting with our fighting men and women from Barksdale and Norfolk to Aviano and Skopje. When I met the Wing Commander of Spangdahlem Air Force Base in Germany, he told me, "Sir, our team wants to stay with this mission until it's finished." He could have spoken for every one of our men and women in uniform. When we and our Allies responded to the rising tide of violence in Kosovo, we sent a message of hope and determination to Europe and all the world.

Let me remind you that there had previously been a terrible war in Bosnia. It took the world community a long time to respond. When we did, we put an end to it, and people are living and working together there in peace. Then as if no lesson had been learned, Mr. Milosevic drove nearly a million people out of their homes in a poor country, over difficult roads and adverse circumstances. Thousands lost their lives, but nearly a million people were run out of their country just because of their ethnic background and the way they worship God. That was a threat to our national interests because it was a threat to the security and stability of southeastern Europe and because it was a colossal affront to the basic notions of human rights and freedom.

The 20th century has witnessed a lot of this kind of hate and human suffering. But it ended with an affirmation of freedom and human dignity, because in the face of division and destruction, we helped to stand with our

Allies and good people in that region for humanity and for freedom.

Well, what's happened since then? Our troops are on the ground in Kosovo, doing another job every bit as vital, working to help the people there rebuild their lives and build a lasting peace. Now our Allies and partners have taken on the lion's share of the burden. Since the end of the conflict, our European Allies and others are supplying 85 percent of the troops and nearly 85 percent of the police on the ground. Our share of international assistance for Kosovo is now well under 20 percent.

It's been a fair burden sharing because we bore the majority of the responsibility for the military conflict that made the peace possible. But it's still important that we do our part. Our presence is vital, for our forces symbolize something fundamental about the promise of America, the possibility of true peace and, frankly, the confidence your presence gives to others because nobody doubts that if any job can be done, you will do it. Our forces in Kosovo are doing a terrific job under still difficult circumstances. We must give them the tools to succeed and the time to succeed.

Yesterday the Senate of the United States, in bipartisan fashion, cast a profoundly important vote. They affirmed our Nation's commitment to stay the course in Kosovo, rejecting language that would have called our resolve into question, permitting people to say, had it passed, that the United States would walk away from a job half-done and leave others to finish. But the Senate said, "No, we won't walk out on our Allies. We won't turn our back on freedom's promise. It may be a difficult job, but we started it, and we intend to finish it." And I would like to thank the Senators, Republicans as well as Democrats, and the American leaders around the country, Republicans as well as Democrats, who took this position to stand by you until the mission is completed.

In 1963, on Armed Forces Day, a great American veteran, President John Kennedy, said that our service men and women "stand as guardians of peace and visible evidence of our determination to meet any threat to the peace with measured strength and high resolve. They are also evidence of a harsh

but inescapable truth, that the survival of freedom requires great cost and commitment and great personal sacrifice."

We're a long way from the cold war world in which President Kennedy spoke those words. But today, the words are still true, where you stand as freedom's guardians in a world where communication is instant but so is destruction, a world where the threats of the last century have largely been vanquished but the timeless demons of hate and fear and new destructive possibilities rooted in new technologies and new networks are with us, in a world where millions still struggle for liberty, decency, and the very basics of life.

Today America thanks you for your commitment, renews our pledge to stand with you, and asks you to continue to do your best and give your best for freedom. The last 50 years are proof that when you do your job, and we support you, the world is a much, much better place.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Hangar 3 at Andrews Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. David C. Jones, USAF, (Ret.), and Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, USA; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Luncheon in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

May 19, 2000

Thank you so much. I told the folks at our table here that I have been in this room many times. The first time I came here was long before I was President, but I've been here a lot since I've been in office. I've been to a lot of dinners, lunches, meetings. I love this city hall, and I love this room, and I never tire of coming here.

I want to thank all of you, and in their absence, the mayor and your former mayor as well, Ed Rendell. He's doing a great job

as the chairman of the Democratic Committee. I thank the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia officials who are here. And I particularly want to say how much I appreciate my good friend Susan Bass Levin, running for Congress in New Jersey, and Pat Casey and Ed O'Brien, running here. I thank Bob Borski and Bob Brady and Chaka Fattah and Ron Klink for being my friends and allies in the United States House.

And let me say to all of you, this is an important occasion, and I want to say just two personal words, if I might, before I begin. First, I'd like to express my deepest condolences for the crash of Pier 34 last night, the loss of life, the people who have been injured. The Coast Guard has been up here helping with the search and rescue, and I've been informed and kept monitored on it. But I know it's a painful thing for the city, and I just wanted to tell you how sorry I am.

I'd also like to say to the Casey brothers here that Hillary and I send our prayers and best wishes to your mother and your father. He has been astonishing these last 7 years. I think his survival and courage in the face of his illness is as important as the remarkable persistence he showed in his political career.

I'm going to—Congressman Borski was saying, I've been to a lot of great events in Philadelphia. We've had a lot of hot rallies and enthusiastic moments, but this is a fairly early period in the election process. And so I'm going to do something a little unconventional today, but what I would like to do is to kind of just have a talk with you as a person who is not on the ballot this year. And most days I'm okay about not being on the ballot. *[Laughter]* The other days that I'm not okay about it, you have the Constitution to protect you. *[Laughter]*

What I'd like to do is just take a little time to have a talk. I would like to tell you what I think this election is really about, what the big issues are, and without going into an enormous amount of detail, what the major differences are, because this is a profoundly important election. We're electing a President who will serve the first full term of the 21st century. We have a chance to change control of the House of Representatives with

a shift of just five seats. We have a chance, believe it or not, to be even-up, or even to be one ahead in the United States Senate, which is why Ron Klink's election is so important.

And I can tell you, I think I know a little something about Pennsylvania. You've been very good to me and voted for me twice. It's my opinion that if his race is competitively funded, I believe he'll win. And so I hope you'll help him be competitive, because we need to win. I was just sitting here thinking off the top of my head, there are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight other seats that could shift from Republican to Democrat. There is, I think, a reasonably good chance that five of them will do so, if our candidates are well funded.

There are about four seats that the Republicans believe they have in play, and I think a better than 50–50 chance only one of them will shift and maybe none. I think the Senate candidate in New York's doing a pretty good job of trying to hold on to—*[laughter]*—and a number of you in this room have helped her, and I'm very grateful for that as well, and I thank you.

So this is a big election. Now, very briefly, here's what I want to say to you about it. But I do want you to try to remember some of these things, because people are going to talk to you about this, and they're going to ask you why you came, and they're going to ask you why you are where you are.

It's clear that our country's in better shape than it was 8 years ago, that we are moving in the right direction, that we not only have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. We've got declining poverty, declining inequality, the lowest minority unemployment rates we've ever recorded. We have the highest homeownership in history. We've got the lowest crime rate in over a quarter century—8 years of decline in a row—welfare rolls about half the size they were 7½ years ago. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against childhood diseases, with over 2 million kids with health insurance that didn't have it before. And I could go on and on.

We set aside more land than any President in history, any administration in history, except those of the two Roosevelts, in the continental United States, something I'm quite proud of.

Now, the first point I want to make is, a lot of you have been very good to me over many years, and you have supported me, and you have been my personal friends. And I am very grateful for that. And you might have been, without regard to the ideas we had or the policies we advocated. But the results would not be this, what they are, if we hadn't stood for the right things. So what has happened is far bigger than my Presidency.

Al Gore deserves a lot of credit for it. He's had, by far, more influence on the affairs of the Nation than any person who ever served as Vice President in that job—by far, not even close. The Congress deserves a lot of credit for it. The other people who helped—those of you that helped us to be elected and reelected. It was a common endeavor, but the consequences that flowed from it happened because what we did was right.

And we were right in the economic fight of '93, when not a single Republican voted with us. We were right in the crime bill fight in '94, when a handful of them voted for us but not many. We were right to insist that if we're going to reform welfare and require able-bodied people to work, we shouldn't hurt the kids. We should guarantee their food and their medicine and that their mothers have child care and transportation if they're going to go into the workplace. And I could give you dozens of other examples. So there is a difference.

Now, I believe the outcome of this election will be determined, in large measure, by what people think the election is about. No one else will ever tell you that. They'll say, "Well, this week Bush is up; Gore is down. Last week Gore was up; Bush was down. Next week it will be something different. The Democrats are here. The Republicans are there." You hear all this handicapping. I believe that in important elections, as you get toward the end, the people come to some sort of conclusion about what the stakes are, what is it about anyway. And the question that they ask and answer may determine the people they vote for.

I believe that this question is, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? Most of us have never seen anything like it in our lifetime. Something like this comes along once in a lifetime. What is it that we propose to do with it? And I hope the answer is, as I said in the State of the Union, we're not going to squander it. We're not going to indulge ourselves with it. We're going to take on the big challenges and seize the big opportunities so that we can build the future of our dreams for our children.

Now, if that's the question, then I believe the Vice President will be elected, because he understands the future and he knows how to get us there. I believe the Democrats will win the congressional races, because they're right on the issues. But the question is important. Now, let me just give you a couple of examples.

Clearly, one big issue is, how can we keep this economic growth going, and can we extend it to people in places that have been left behind? Big question. Is there any difference in the approach of the two parties? Absolutely. What's our belief? Our belief is that we ought to have a targeted tax cut that will help people do the essential things: take care of elderly or disabled family members; send their kids to college; pay for child care; help them raise their children if they're making very low incomes. But we ought to save enough money to also invest in education and new technologies and scientific and medical research, and most important, we've got to keep paying this debt down to keep the interest rates down.

You see right now, every time the Fed meets, there's this big debate about whether they should keep raising interest rates, because how long can this economy grow without inflation. If we keep paying the Government's debt down, we can make it possible for you to borrow money at lower interest rates to finance personal costs like cars and homes or expansion of businesses. This is a big deal.

Their position is, we should have a huge across-the-board tax cut and other costly items that I believe would ensure that we would go back to deficit spending and that would drive interest rates up again. It would

make it very difficult to keep the expansion going.

Now, I do have some hope that we'll have a bipartisan agreement on what I call the new markets initiative to help provide incentives for people who invest in the neighborhoods in America, in urban American and rural America, that haven't grown. But we still won't be able to get that done unless the overall economy keeps growing.

So there's a huge difference here in economic policy, and it cannot be papered over. And the people need to sort of say, "Well, do we think this whole thing is an accident, or do we think this economic policy is on automatic, and you couldn't mess it up if you tried. And therefore, there are no consequences?"

I can tell you, I don't believe that. I have worked day and night for 7½ years to make good economic decisions for America. And I believe it is imperative that we have a tax cut that we can afford, that we invest as much as we can afford but that we keep paying this debt down, and make sure that even as we save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boom generation, we're continuing to keep the economy strong.

And there is a serious difference here in economic philosophy. And so you can decide whether you would like to go back to the—their theory is that if they have a huge across-the-board tax cut, and people with a lot of money, including more than half of you in this room who would get a lot of the money—if you get even more and have lower taxes, that you will invest it, and even if interest rates go up and inflation goes up, that it will be all right.

I believe that we ought to confine the tax cut to what we can afford, keep investing in education and technology, and keep this debt coming down because that's going to keep the economy stronger. And it's a big tax cut. You know, the average person is paying \$2,000 less in home mortgages, \$200 a year less in college loan payments and car payments than they would have paid if we hadn't gotten rid of the deficit. So it's a big deal.

Now, this is not what you see in the daily headlines, but it's a serious issue. And you guys—you ought to be discussing it.

The second thing is, how are we going to deal with the challenge of the aging of America? Now, this is beginning to be discussed in a serious way in the headlines, and I like that. That's good for America. There are two big—from our point of view—the next President and the next Congress will have to deal with the challenge of the aging of America primarily in three ways. One, the big issue is, how are you going to reform Medicare, and are you going to add a prescription drug benefit? Two, how are you going to make sure Social Security doesn't go broke, and what else do you want to do with it? And three, how are you going to help people deal with elderly or disabled family members that need long-term care?

Now, on those issues I think there are differences, and I'll just go through them real quick. There is a chance that we'll reach a bipartisan agreement on a long-term care tax credit. If so, I'll be thankful for it. It's a good thing to do, and we ought to do it.

On Medicare, our differences, largely, today are over the nature of the structural reforms on Medicare, because I think it's important not to mess it up. And the truth is, I think a lot of the health care providers need more money to pay for the Medicare program, not less. And I believe we should add a prescription drug benefit which I think, over the long run, will save money, because we would never design a program for seniors today that didn't have prescription drugs.

Thirty-five years ago, when we set up Medicare, it was basically to help people when they got real sick, for doctor bills and hospital bills. Now, when people are living longer than ever before, we want to keep people well and minimize the costs they impose on the health care system and increase the length and the quality of their lives.

So we've got a big difference between the two parties on this. They say we should help people up to 150 percent of the poverty line with their medicine, but it would be too costly to go above that. We say half the people in the country who lack affordable prescription drug coverage—half—are over 150 percent of the poverty line. And if you're living on \$15,000 a year and you've got a \$300-a-month drug cost or a \$500 a month cost, you

don't have much money left, and you should get help, too.

They say our program is too costly. We say theirs doesn't really do the job and that we have the money and we set it aside, and we can pay for it and still pay the debt down and still—and I think I ought to get some—I think we, the Democrats, including the Vice President and the Members of Congress, should be entitled to the benefit of the doubt on this. Why? Because when we took office in '93, Medicare was supposed to go broke in '99, last year. Now it's projected to be alive and well until 2024. So we have shown that we can control costs, make tough decisions. And as I said, I'm not sure we didn't overdo it. I think we're going to have to give the health care providers a little of that money back. We tried to do it in the budget last year.

But that's a big difference. Now, on Social Security, there's a very interesting debate emerging where the Republican position is essentially for younger people paying into the Social Security system—younger is, I guess, a relative term. I think younger is anybody today younger than I am. *[Laughter]* But it hasn't been worked out yet, but basically, they say, "Look, we'll guarantee everybody who is on Social Security now and people who are near retirement, their retirement benefits. And everybody else, we're going to give them 2 percent of payroll back and let them invest it, because they can get a higher rate of return than Social Security could." And it sounds reasonable. And a lot of you who have made money in the stock market, it may sound great to you. And they point out Social Security is supposed to go broke in 2034, that the baby boomers, when they retire, there will be two people working for every one person retired. And the rate of return that you get for your investment in Social Security they say is very low.

Now, here's what we say, generally, although there are differences in our crowd about this, what we say is: You can't measure Social Security's rate of return the way you do everything else, because a third of Social Security money goes to take care of disabled people. Don't forget that. This is not just a Social Security retirement program. This is a program—if you have a child who—God

forbid—has a paralyzing accident and you're in a limited income group, Social Security will help you. A third of this money goes to people with disabilities. So a lot of these arguments that are made about what a bad investment Social Security is obscure the fact that it is something all of us pay to benefit the minority of us that are going to have something really difficult happen to our family members.

But if you just look at the retirement fund, they say, "Well, the stock market always outperforms Government investments over a 30-year period," which is true. We say, "What about the poor suckers who retire in the bad times when they don't get the 30-year period?"

Let me just say—and they say Americans ought to be able to create wealth; lower income Americans ought to be able to create wealth, just like we can. And they're right about that. But there's another way—but we say there's another way to do it. This is a serious debate.

Here's what I want to tell you. Here's the problem with the proposal that they made, in my view. Keep in mind, Social Security is supposed to go broke anyway in 34 years, right? So if you give everybody under 40, or everybody under 50, 2 percent of their payroll back, you will shrink the number of years it takes for the thing to go broke, because there will be less money being paid into Social Security.

So they have to pay what are called big transition costs if they want to guarantee the Social Security payments for everybody that retired or is about to retire—hundreds of billion of dollars. If you put that on top of the big tax cut they proposed, we'll certainly be in deficits. If the economy goes down, all these discussions become academic, because the numbers just get terrible. You may think this is a highly technical discussion, but this is your life we're talking about here.

Here's what I think ought to be done. I think that we should allow low income people a chance to accumulate wealth, but we ought to do it outside the Social Security system with the proposal I made the year before last to let people set up savings accounts. And I think—and something else you should know—if Congress would simply vote to put

the interest savings that we get from paying the debt down because of your Social Security taxes into the Social Security Trust Fund, we could take the life of the Social Security Trust Fund out way beyond the life expectancy of the baby boom generation.

If you spent money directly to give lower income people money to save and invest, you could give them a chance to participate in the wealth of the country, and you could, in other words, fix the problem without running the risk. And the only problem would be for that is that those of us in higher income groups would not get 2 percent of payroll that we pay in Social Security to invest in the stock market, but most of us have already got money or can find money or have the capacity to save.

So this is a big difference. And I welcome this debate, but I believe we have the better side of the argument here. I hope you can see—I'll just give you—economic policy, Medicare, Social Security, huge differences. I haven't even talked about the environment, where there are massive differences, or whether we're going to continue to provide more affordable health care for working families and children, where there are huge differences, or whether we should pass hate crimes legislation, where there are huge differences, or Patients' Bill of Rights or raise the minimum wage.

What should our crime control policy be? When I was walking the streets with Ed Rendell in 1991, people just took a chance on this. We've now had 8 years of declining crime in a row. What works? A comprehensive policy: Put more police on the street; punish people who should be punished; enforce the laws that are there; have common-sense measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. That's our policy.

Their policy is—I have to drag them kicking and screaming to get any more for police—increase the penalties for everything, do nothing else to help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. I think we should close the gun show loophole. I think that people that get handguns ought to have a photo ID that proves that they don't have a problem in their background and that they can use the gun safely. I think that's reasonable.

I think we ought to put 50,000 more police on the street. Even our Democrats who disagree with me on the gun issue are for putting more police on the street. So there's a difference between us and them on crime.

And let me tell you an issue that almost is never at stake in an election, but we have serious differences on world peace and security this year. Yesterday—I don't know if you saw it, but I'm very grateful—I had a handful of Republicans, and I want to thank them for joining the overwhelming number of Democrats in voting to support the mission we undertook in Kosovo. I know it wasn't popular when I did it, but it was the right thing to do. A million people got run out of their homes because of their religion and their ethnic background. The last time we let that happen in Europe and didn't do anything to stop it, the results were not salutary. And I'm proud of what we did in Bosnia and Kosovo, and it was the right thing to do. A majority of our party was for my position. A majority of theirs was against it.

They defeated the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I think that's a terrible mistake. I think we should continue to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons. They believe it's an anachronistic document. They honestly believe that. It's not a personal attack. I'm saying we have honest differences. The only place where our party is still divided over trade—and you all know about that—I'm for the China trade agreement because I think it's a good deal, economically, and I know it's important to our national security.

But that masks a larger issue that I urge you to look for also in this election, which is that we Democrats, even those who disagree with me on China, we believe it's going to be impossible to create a global economy without also having some sort of global society. And therefore, we believe we should be moving toward not only an integration of the global economy but a lifting of labor standards, an abolition of child labor, an abolition of other labor abuses, lifting of environmental standards across the world, so that people all over the world share this. And I think our party is united on this. Most of the folks in the other party think that that will probably happen anyway if there's more trade, and we shouldn't push it.

Now, I know most of you probably thought you were just coming to a political rally today and not a seminar on trade and all this other stuff. [Laughter] But I'm telling you, this is what the election is about. If you're worried about how your kids and your grandchildren are going to live and what kind of country you're going to live in, it really matters. There are differences in economic policy, differences in how we'll handle the aging of America, differences in how we'll handle health care, the environment, minimum wage, other family-related policies, and big differences in what we want to do in education, which I didn't even get into.

Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old. We want to help you build and repair thousands of schools in this country. They think it's not a Federal responsibility. We want to give families a \$10,000 tax deduction to send their kids to college. That's a tax cut we're for. So far we haven't sold them on it. So there are big, big differences.

You look at the kids in this room—I'm just telling you, I worked for 7½ years to try to turn this country around. And I'm not on the ballot, and I'm talking to you as a citizen. I have waited all my life to see our country in a position to build a future of our dreams. And what I hope will happen is that we will not have a mean election. We don't have to say they're bad people. We should assume they're honorable people and that they mean to do exactly what they say. And they should assume the same about us. But we should deal with everything they say, not just what comes out in the general election, as opposed to the primary. It ought to be a comprehensive record here. But we should assume we have two honorable people running for President, honorable people running for Congress. We intend to do what we say; they intend to do what they say. And you need to say, where are the differences and what are the consequences?

And when you leave here, if somebody asks you what do you think the election is about, I hope you'll say, "It's what are we going to do with our prosperity, whether we're going to build the future of our dreams for our kids. I want to vote for people who understand the future, who can take us there. I don't believe we ought to jeopardize the

economic policy that has brought us this much prosperity. I think we ought to deal with the aging of America in a way that helps promote both opportunity and guarantees for people who need it. I think we ought to do more to improve excellence in education for everybody. We ought to bring economic opportunity to the people who have been left behind. I think the Democrats are right on these things, and that's why I'm staying here. Look at the minimum wage. Look at Patients' Bill of Rights. Look at all these other issues." That's what I hope you will say.

But whatever happens, I hope every single solitary soul you talk to between now and November, you will tell, "Look, do not blow this. This is the American people's chance to conduct vastly important job interviews that will determine what kind of people we're going to be in 10, 15 or 20 years. And we've never had a chance like this before, at least in my lifetime, so I want us to make the most of it."

We need a Democratic majority in the House. We need to win these other elections—not for partisan reasons but because the divides between us, I think, are clear, and I believe we're right. If you think that, don't leave your activity when you walk out the door here. Keep talking about it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:18 p.m. in Room 202 at City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor John Street of Philadelphia; Mayor Susan Bass Levin of Cherry Hill, NJ, candidate for New Jersey's Third Congressional District; Pat Casey, candidate for Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional District, his father, former Gov. Robert P. Casey of Pennsylvania, and his mother, Ellen; Ed O'Brien, candidate for Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District; and Representative Ron Klink, candidate for U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania.

Remarks at Mayer Sulzberger Middle School in Philadelphia May 19, 2000

Well, one thing I can say is, I'm glad I didn't have to run against Toya Doe for President of the United States. [Laughter] Didn't she do a wonderful job? I thought she was great. She was terrific. Thank you.

I'm so glad to see you all. I'm glad to be back in Philadelphia. I want to thank my great friend Chaka Fattah for so many things, but especially for championing this program and creating the certificate that the students will receive today. I also want to acknowledge the presence here of another great Member of the House of Representatives from the State of Pennsylvania, Ron Klink. Thank you for being here today, Ron.

I thank Pedro Ramos for his fine remarks and his work. And I thank your principal, Kathleen Lacey, for having us here. Thank you. I'd also like to acknowledge, on this side of me is the Deputy Secretary of Education from Washington, DC, the people who fund this program, Mr. Frank Holleman. Thanks for coming, Frank.

And we also have the Shoemaker Middle School principal, James Slaughter, and two of your cluster leaders, Janet Samuels and Armita Sims. Thank you for being here. And I'd also like to acknowledge the two school board members who are here, Sandra Glenn and my longtime friend Reverend Ralph Blanks. It's nice to see you, my friend. I'm glad to see you.

There's one more Sulzberger success story I'd like to acknowledge today, and that is a man who was Vice President of his class here 42 years ago, just got a master's degree in education—in elementary education and administration. And he's a teacher at Shoemaker, Congressman Fattah's father, Mr. David Fattah. Welcome. Thank you, sir.

Now, before I talk about this program, I have to just mention one other thing, because something happened nearby here yesterday that I want to mention. Previous speakers have said that I devoted a lot of time as President to education, and I have. I have supported virtually every one of the reforms that Mr. Ramos discussed. I believe there should be no social promotion, but I think there ought to be strategies to turn around schools that aren't working. I think that children ought to have after-school and summer school programs and mentoring programs. I don't think kids should be branded failures when the system fails them. So I think all children can learn. That's why I like this.

I have supported the school dress policy that you mentioned and zero tolerance for

guns in schools. But one of the things I have recognized over the years is that the first and most important thing is that our children have to be safe in school and on the way to and from school if they're going to learn in school.

The reason I bring that up today is that I've been heavily involved in trying to make our streets and our schools safer, for over 7 years. I'm proud of the fact that crime has gone down every year I've been in office and that we've put another 100,000 police on the streets. We've provided more after-school programs and other things for kids to do. We passed the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban. But we need to do more.

And I have advocated a comprehensive strategy for stronger enforcement of the laws on the books, putting 50,000 more police on the street in high crime neighborhoods, and doing more to keep guns away from criminals and kids, including closing the gun show loophole and requiring child trigger locks and stopping large ammunition clips from being imported. I also think if people buy a handgun, they ought to get a license, like they do when they buy a car, to prove they don't have a criminal background and they know how to use the gun safely.

But anyway, the reason I mention this today is, yesterday the State Senate of your neighbor, New Jersey, in an overwhelming bipartisan vote, Republicans and Democrats, voted to raise the legal age of handgun purchase to 21, to require ballistics tests for all new guns, so we can keep up with the bullets used in crimes, to increase enforcement efforts and require the development of smart guns that can only be fired by the people who own them and, therefore, cannot be stolen or otherwise used or abused.

Now, this is a big deal because it will also minimize accidental deaths involving children. So I just wanted to say that the people of New Jersey and their representatives, in joining California, Massachusetts, Maryland, and other States in taking this kind of action, deserve our thanks. This will not keep any lawful gun owner from hunting, from sport-shooting, from having weapons for self-defense, nothing that changes the law of lawful ownership, but it will save some children's lives, like the kids that are in this room today.

And that's what that Million Mom March was about last weekend. Nobody wants to take anything away from anybody they're legally entitled to. But we ought to do more to make America the safest big country in the world. And the NRA—they're about to meet in their convention down in Charlotte today, and I hope they have a good meeting, but I hope they—they need to think about this. Nobody who differs with them on this issue is trying to take anybody's gun away from them, but we just want more criminals and kids to be without the ability to get guns, because they're not suppose to have them. And nobody claims they can legally have them, and we just want to keep more people alive. And I think New Jersey did a good thing yesterday, and we ought to give them a hand for what they did. *[Applause]*

Now, I want to talk about GEAR UP a minute. And I want to sort of tell you how this started. It was mentioned earlier that a person in Philadelphia had promised sixth graders if they'd stay in school that he would send them to college. I have a friend in New York, Gene Lang, who did that many years ago—promised the kids at this old elementary school that if they'd stay in school, he'd send them to college.

And Chaka came to me one day, Congressman Fattah did, and he said, "You know, we're doing all this work to open the doors of college to everybody." Now, for example, all you kids, if you had to borrow the money to go to college, you might say, "Well, how can I borrow the money to go to college? I might not be able to pay it back." So we changed the law so you can borrow the money at lower costs, and then, whatever you decide to do, you can pay it back as a small percentage of your annual salary, no matter how much you borrow.

We increased the Pell grants. We passed the HOPE scholarship, which gives a tax credit of up to \$1,500 for a college education, which essentially says that we make community college free. This year, I'm asking the Congress to allow a tax deduction of up to 28 percent of the cost of college tuition, up to \$10,000. So if you owe \$2,800 in income tax and you spend up to \$10,000 on college tuition, you wouldn't owe any income tax anymore. That would be good.

Anyway, what he said to me was, "That's all well and good, but most people that I know in inner-city Philadelphia"—or rural Arkansas, where I'm from, for that matter—"they don't know we did that. And the kids that need it most are least likely to know about it." So, he said, "We ought to have a mentoring program to help kids when they're coming of age and they start to think about this, so that they get the learning and other support they need, and they know that they will be able to go to college if they do what they're supposed to do."

We worked as hard as we could to open the doors of college for all, but you guys have got to walk through those doors. And I really believe that in the future we will look back and see this GEAR UP program as a profoundly important step in ending inequality, in lifting people in America. And no matter what he said giving me credit for it, it was Congressman Fattah's idea. It wouldn't be here if it weren't for him, and he deserves the credit.

One thing I noticed about being President is, because you've got the microphone, you tend to get the credit. Now, sometimes you tend to get the blame, too. *[Laughter]* I was glad to support it, glad to fight for it, and I'm glad we got it done. But I thank you, Congressman, for what you did.

Now, why is it so important? Your great Philadelphian, Benjamin Franklin, once said, "Genius without education is like silver in the mine." Not mind, mine. What does that mean? The silver is not worth anything unless you get it out of the mine, right? Otherwise, it's just down some dark hole somewhere. So always, always, education has been important. But today it is more important than ever before. And all of you know why, don't you?

You've seen computers. You know how the Internet works. What you may not know is that we are doubling the whole volume of knowledge in the world about every 5 years now. We are developing supercomputers that will soon operate on chips the size of a tear-drop. You will live in an age where you'll find out what's in the black holes in outer space and what's in the deepest holes in the ocean.

You may know somebody that's in a wheelchair because they had an accident. Probably

in the lifetime of the children in this room, the biological sciences and the computer sciences will merge, and when somebody has an accident and they've injured their spine, they'll take a picture of that spine, and a computer program will design a little chip you can put in the spine that will allow people to get up and walk—in your lifetime.

I think in your lifetime we'll find cures for Alzheimer's, for Parkinson's disease. I think we'll have a vaccine for AIDS. I think we'll be able to keep women from dying from breast cancer and men from dying from prostate cancer. I think that you will communicate, as a normal course, through your computers over the Internet with people all over the world. And pretty soon that little screen that you use for the Internet will get smaller and smaller, and you'll be able to use it for telephone conversations and for your television. And all your communications will be in one small but powerful computer, with one screen and one keyboard. And then someday, you'll get rid of the keyboard, and you'll just talk at the computer, and it will do what you tell it to.

It's going to be an exciting time. But if you don't have a good education, if you don't read well, speak clearly, write well, understand basic math and basic technology, you won't be able to take full advantage of it. On the other hand, if you do have a good education, this technological revolution is going to take more people out of poverty more quickly and enable more poor neighborhoods in America and poor villages in remote countries around the world to develop their capacities than anything that has ever happened in all of human history.

So I might see, as you grow up, the poor parts of my native State in the Mississippi Delta flourishing, because it won't matter that they're way out in the country anymore because they're connected to the Internet. I'll be able to see poor neighborhoods in Philadelphia and New York City and other urban areas able to get the same kind of investment and start the same kind of businesses and do the same kind of things anybody anywhere else can—if we have a good education.

You know, there are places in America—you kids might be surprised about this—

there are Indian reservations in America where 70 percent of the people still don't have telephones—70 percent—where over half the people don't have jobs. But they, too, can be helped but only if they have education.

So I wanted to come here today because I think kids in poor neighborhoods and poor places like I grew up are just as smart as kids anywhere else. I think the good Lord has made education equal. But I think you've got to gear up. [*Laughter*] Otherwise, I don't care how smart you are—Ben Franklin was right, your silver might as well be down in the mine.

I was the first person in my family ever to go to college. I had a grandmother who got a correspondent's degree in nursing, lived in a little old place with about 50 people until she was old enough to move to the biggest city around, which had 6,000 people in it. But from the time I was a kid, for whatever reason, my mother and my grandmother and my step-father, who didn't have a high school diploma, they told me I was going to college. From the time I was 8 or 9, I believed them. They said it, and I just decided I was.

We've done everything we could to remove the financial barriers. We've done everything we could to give your schools support, to identify problems and turn them around and increase the quality of education. But the children have to live in an environment where excellence is expected and people know it will be rewarded. So the idea behind GEAR UP is, get children when they're young and stay with them until they actually go to college.

Every one of you who's been a part of it, I thank you. I thank the leaders from the schools, the universities, the businesses, the community organizations for mentoring our young people, for taking them around college campuses, for letting people see colleges and imagine it. I never went on a college campus when I was 9 or 10 years old, I think, until my music took me there. One of the things I learned from the time I was your age is, if you want to do something big with your life, first you have to imagine that you can do it. You have to know how to put a picture in your mind of what you want to be.

So Toya says, "I want to be a teacher." How does she know she wants to be a teacher? Because she's seen people teaching and doing good things and lighting fires of excitement in children's minds. And so she can imagine what a wonderful thing it would be to be a good teacher.

The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." I wish it were written in positive terms: Where there is vision, the people flourish. I want you to be able to imagine your dreams. And that's another big part of this program.

I want to thank all the educators for getting the young people excited about academic achievement and helping to improve their study skills and strengthening the curriculum and getting kids to take courses like algebra they might otherwise just as soon not take, but it will help you go to college. And take the hard courses. Challenge yourself. Your mind is just like any other muscle in your body. If you want it to work better, you've got to work at it. Don't be afraid.

Do you know that over 90 percent of the people—really about 99 percent of the people—are capable of learning 100 percent of what they need to know to do nearly anything. Most of us never use more than a modest percentage of our brain power. You should be brave. You can do it.

I believe that intelligence is equally distributed in the world, but opportunity isn't. What we're trying to do is to make opportunity as equally distributed as intelligence is. But effort is not equally distributed either.

I remember when—I'm going to Chicago when I leave you, and since Philadelphia is in the basketball playoffs and Chicago isn't, I can now say this. *[Laughter]* Back in the years when the Bulls were doing so well—you know, my wife grew up in Chicago—so we were out there, and we knew a lot of people that were associated with them. And everybody was talking about how Michael Jordan was the greatest natural basketball player they had ever seen. And this friend of mine who was associated with the Bulls said, "Yes, he certainly is, and you'd be amazed, because he's also the first person that comes to practice, the last person that leaves. He still shoots more free throws in practice than anybody on the team. You'd be

amazed how much more of a natural athlete he is because he works harder than everybody else."

I like to play golf. But once I heard a commentator say to a great golfer that all the people who played with him said it was astonishing that he was also a lucky golfer. And he said, "Yes, I've been real lucky, but I've noticed that the harder I work, the luckier I get." *[Laughter]*

So we're dealing with three things here: What you've got inside you, the silver in the mine; whether you have opportunities and you know it, your vision; and then your effort, which only you can supply. But we believe in you, and you must believe in yourself. You've got to stay in school and aim high and go to college, because you can afford it and there will be a place for you. And there is only going to be more emphasis on that.

And I understand that the Sulzberger School already has 300 students enrolled. And I understand that the reading and math scores have already gone up. So I want to tell you—I'm just going to make one announcement today, because I believe in this. Today we're going to give out \$185 million in new grants for summer school and after-school programs, to support 48 States in setting up learning centers, to try to help more people do what you're doing in this GEAR UP program and in other programs that work. Everybody needs an education in America, and we've got to provide it.

Now, guess what? We had 1,000 good applications we can't fund with that \$185 million. And one of the things that I want to do to support GEAR UP here is to get enough money into our budget so that every school in the country will be able to offer after-school programs to every child who needs it. That's in our budget this year. And we're going to fight for it, and I hope you'll help us.

And so far, we haven't persuaded the Congress to adopt this or to fully fund Representative Fattah's GEAR UP program so that more kids can be in it. But I think that my coming here and showing you and having Toya speak to the country through the press corps here, ought to give a little more impetus behind the GEAR UP program. We need more support for it.

Out here in this audience today, there may be another future great President; there may be another future great business leader; there may be another future great minister; there may be someone who will discover an absolute cure for AIDS; there may be someone who will design a car that will get 500 or 600 miles a gallon. All of you think about that. One of you could do that. And every one of you can have a good life and do something that makes a difference and have children of your own that will have even better lives. That's what GEAR UP is all about. We believe in you. And we want you to believe in yourselves.

Good luck, and God bless you.

Now, symbolizing what every student who completes this program will do, Congressman Fattah and I are going to give Toya Doe, representing all of you, her 21st Century Scholars Certificate. I hope that all of you will have these, go through this program, and finish it. This is a ticket to the future. And remember, if you gear up, you'll get to college. And after that, there's no stopping you.

So let's give Toya another big hand. [*Applause*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Toya Doe, student, who introduced the President; Janet C. Samuels, University City Cluster Leader; Armita B. Sims, Overbrook Cluster Leader; and Pedro Ramos, president, Philadelphia Board of Education.

Statement on China-European Union Negotiations on China's Accession to the World Trade Organization

May 19, 2000

I welcome the conclusion of the bilateral negotiations between China and the European Union on China's accession to the WTO. This agreement highlights the importance of congressional passage of permanent normal trade relations with China.

It is now clearer than ever that China will join the World Trade Organization. For America to reap the broad benefits of China's historic decision to open its markets and to strengthen the forces of positive change in China, Congress must enact PNTR. A vote

against PNTR will cost America exports and jobs, cede this massive new market to our competitors in Europe and Japan, and embolden those resisting reform in China.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

May 13

The President declared a disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe forest fire beginning on May 5 and continuing.

The President declared a disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe thunderstorms and flash flooding on May 6–7.

May 15

The President announced his intention to nominate Glenn A. Fine to be Inspector General at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Roger W. Kallock to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lucia A. Wyman as a member of the Advisory Council of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission.

May 16

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Albany, NY, and in the evening, he traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

The President announced his intention to appoint Debra S. Knopman, Daniel B. Bullen, and Priscilla Nelson as members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. Lyford to be a member of the Board of Directors for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

May 17

In the morning, the President traveled to New London, CT.

In the evening, the President traveled to Greenwich, CT, and later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

May 18

The President announced his intention to nominate Don Harrell to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

May 19

In the morning, the President traveled to Suitland, MD, and later he traveled to Philadelphia, PA. In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chicago, IL.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

The President announced his intention to appoint Pam Fleischaker, Harold Gershowitz, John F. Kordek, and Leo Melamed to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sanford Weill to serve as a member of the President's Export Council.

The President declared a major disaster in South Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm, flooding, landslides, and mudslides on April 18–20.

**Nominations
Submitted to the Senate**

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted May 17

Roger W. Kallock,
of Ohio, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness (new position).

Robert Mays Lyford,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Invest-

ment Corporation for a term expiring December 17, 2002, vice Harvey Sigelbaum, term expired.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released May 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Financial Disclosure Statement for President Clinton

Financial Disclosure Statement for Vice President Gore

Released May 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released May 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released May 19

Fact sheet: Armed Forces Day Turns 50

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved May 15

S. 452 / Private Law 106–4
For the relief of Belinda McGregor

Approved May 18

H.R. 434 / Public Law 106–200
Trade and Development Act of 2000

S. 1744 / Public Law 106–201
To amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to provide that certain species conservation reports shall continue to be required to be submitted

S. 2323 / Public Law 106–202
Worker Economic Opportunity Act